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Visit by Japanese Premier reflects a changing stance

General-Anzeiger

Japanese Premier Noboru Takeshita's tour of Western Europe, taking in Rome, London and Bonn, was of prime political importance.

He sought to inaugurate a new era in cooperation with the Federal Republic of Germany and Western Europe, a balanced, three-cornered relationship with Europe and the United States.

That was the real political significance of his tour, which was aimed at making European politicians aware of the possible political dimensions.

As part of this strategy the new Japanese government attaches great importance to relations with Bonn.

The visit must also be seen as a clear sign of attempts by Tokyo to free itself from America's apron-strings.

The new Japanese government, especially Premier Takeshita, has realised that too onesided a fixation on Washington contradicts a Japanese role in world affairs of more than economic importance.

Mr Takeshita has gone to great lengths to show how important his government feels Europe is. He will be revisiting Europe next month, taking in Belgium and the European Commission, France and Holland.

The tour was split in this way on account of the French Presidential elections, but this timing was a welcome opportunity for Japan to underscore the importance it attaches to Western Europe.

Bonn government officials are agreed that Tokyo has come to set new value on the European Community.

On major political issues, such as southern Africa or the quest for solutions to the Gulf conflict, Japan has more than once been keen to coordinate its views with those of the European Community.

This readiness in principle for closer cooperation cannot mean, either for Europe or for Bonn, politely meeting Tokyo half-way on *all* issues.

The same must apply to the Japanese desire for closer coordination in Western European security policy.

Japan and the Federal Republic both "border" on Warsaw Pact states, so there is every good reason for carefully conferring with Mr Takeshita and arriving at common viewpoints on security policy trends and developments in Moscow.

In connection with the disarmament talks there has been considerable irritation in Tokyo with the attitude of a number of European politicians who are felt to have turned a blind eye to Soviet missiles in Asia in return for the scrapping of medium-range missiles in Europe.

For this reason alone it is hard to see how Japan can be incorporated in Western security policy.

In talks with Premier Takeshita Chancellor Kohl made it clear that the German government was keen to gain better access to the Japanese market.

Japan's desire for cooperation must indeed be measured in terms of the extent to which political leaders in Tokyo are prepared to abandon the rigid protectionism that has sealed off the home market from competition of any kind.

On this basis Japan can have no more than a strictly limited attraction for European investors as an industrial location.

Yet here too, and despite heavy domestic lobbying of the Takeshita government, there seems to be a cautious trend to reappraise the situation.



Japanese Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita (left) is welcomed to Germany by Bonn Chancellor Helmut Kohl. (Photo: AP)

Access to Japanese markets has been markedly improved in recent years, but nowhere near sufficiently.

Japan must realise that free trade *with Europe and the United States* is an indispensable prerequisite for a true three-cornered partnership.

Japanese industrial executives surely have little need to worry that their products might not prove competitive.

Premier Takeshita's visit was marked by fulsome praise of the quality of bilateral relations.

The new approach he has adopted will make it easier for the Bonn government to see more clearly the contours *and the status of a country that at times* has not commanded the full attention of German foreign policy.

His visit did not lead to immediate or specific results; it was important more for the exchange of political views on a new basis.

Thomas Wittke

(General-Anzeiger, Bonn, 5 May 1988)

IN THIS ISSUE



After the smoke cleared: Heiko Hoffmann (left), head of the CDU ticket, congratulates the SPD winner, Björn Engholm. See story right. (Photo: dpa)



SPD wins State in landslide after 38 years

The Social Democrats have come to power in Schleswig-Holstein in a landslide election victory. Their share of the vote increased by nearly 10 percentage points to almost 55 per cent.

The Christian Democrats, who had held power in Kiel for 38 years, with an absolute majority until an election last year, lost *10 percentage points* and polled only 33 per cent.

The Barschel affair hurt the CDU in two ways (CDU Premier Uwe Barschel was accused of ordering a smear campaign against SPD leader Björn Engholm last year, resigned and was found dead in a Geneva hotel room).

The dirty tricks put many off; others were disgusted the way the CDU first backed Barschel, then dropped him.

Premier-elect Engholm, who can now rule with an absolute majority, gained many new voters, and not just in view of his moderation and decency over the smear campaign.

He also benefited from general dissatisfaction with the Bonn government. But the SPD should not regard Engholm's platform, which includes a nuclear power phase-out, as a winner.

The Free Democrats failed to poll five per cent and go out of the assembly. The Greens failed at the fourth attempt; the SSW (Danish minority) polled more votes; and right-wing extremists made no headway (unlike in Baden-Württemberg a few weeks ago).

Provisional results: SPD 54.8 per cent, 46 seats (at last election 45.2 per cent, 36 seats); CDU 33.3, 27 (42.6, 33); FDP 4.4, - (5.2, 4); Greens 2.9, - (3.9, -); SSW (Danish minority party) 1.7, 1 (1.5, 1); Others 2, - (1.3, -).

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 9 May 1988)

■ WORLD AFFAIRS

Political factors in interpreting role of Bundeswehr outside Nato territory

Must Bundeswehr units see front-line action? This question has regularly preoccupied German opinion since the outbreak of the Gulf War in autumn 1980.

The almost automatic answer has been a flat negative. But a new note has lately been sounded in the debate. It has gone almost unnoticed and come from a most unexpected quarter.

SPD defence expert Norbert Gansel, for instance, has said the Bundesmarine might patrol the Gulf under the UN ensign — if Basic Law, the 1949 Bonn constitution, were amended accordingly.

FDP disarmament spokesman Olaf Feldmann, who is anything but a staunch right-winger, feels there is a bona fide role for the Bundeswehr in the "surveillance and safeguarding of peace in Central America."

What ought our views on the subject to be? Which arguments are good, which bad?

Standard practice is to refer to Basic Law as "unambiguously" (and suchlike) ruling out, as a matter of principle, Bundeswehr operations outside Nato territory.

The aim of such pontifications is, generally speaking, to end the debate where in reality it ought to begin.

It is to nip in the bud, by means of constitutional commandments inscribed in granite, an extremely difficult political debate on the Federal Republic's understanding of itself, its role and its interests.

Is the position really as straightforward as it is made out to be? What can be said for sure is that the Federal Security Council arrived at a political decision on 3 November 1982 against unreasonable demands Bonn's allies might make.

It ruled that by the terms of Basic Law the armed forces could only be sent into action when the Federal Republic itself was attacked.

Constitutions are seldom as straightforward as that, and Basic Law is no exception.

The much-vaunted Article 87 a of Basic Law says: "Other than for defence the armed forces may only be sent into action in such cases as are expressly permitted by this Basic Law."

The relevant commentary by Mangoldt and Klein says: "The main emphasis of this provision (is) on limiting domestic use of the armed forces."

The Bundeswehr's domestic role is outlined explicitly as being in connection with civil defence, say, or "to avert an imminent threat to the free and democratic system of government."

In principle, says Würzburg international lawyer Dieter Blumenwitz, the constitution "expressly regulates the use of the armed forces only in a domestic context."

The much-quoted Article 26, which prohibits preparations for a war of aggression and for activities that disturb the peace, "seeks to prevent peaceful coexistence from being jeopardised from within, from the domestic situation in the Federal Republic," to quote Mangoldt and Klein.

This is a reference to activities such as warmongering, systematic disregard for international treaties and fundamental rejection of peaceful settlements — and was clearly made in response to the policies pursued by the Nazis prior to 1939.

The significant feature of this provision, say Mangoldt and Klein, is that it subordinates German foreign policy to international law. But international law takes an extremely wide view of the concept of defence.

It permits self-defence, as sanctioned by Article 115 a of Basic Law, not only in response to a direct attack on a country's territory but also in the event of, say, attacks on ships and aircraft much further afield.

In other words, Basic Law is not necessarily the straitjacket it is made out to be. It is subject to interpretation.

It follows that decisions on whether, when and how Bundeswehr units are to be sent into action outside Nato territory are largely political in nature.

Arriving at political decisions is more difficult than interpreting the constitution.

For 40 years the Federal Republic has fared well with its self-imposed fetters. It has boosted its national product while its allies have defended interests, at times their own, at times overriding ones such as freedom of the seas, all over the world.

While the Americans and, at an appropriate distance, the French and the British have taken Iran to task, Teheran has remained Bonn's foremost trading partner in the region.

Yet the Federal Republic has been bound by international interests, especially in the Gulf, where freedom of shipping is of vital interest to all trading nations.

It would undoubtedly be "abysmally rash and reckless," as Helmut Schmidt put it in 1980, to intervene everywhere without so much as a by your leave.

But when *do* German interests, when *does* Germany's sense of responsibility, say, warrant the use of military might?

The following range of criteria is conceivable. For a medium-sized power with limited options the language of diplomacy is always better than that of arms.

By the same token the relief of allied fleets in the Atlantic (as a gesture of solidarity) is better than despatching naval units to the Gulf.

Multilateral moves within a UN or Nato framework, might be conceivable; unilateral moves must be ruled out absolutely.

But what arguments can be marshalled against taking part in a UN peace-keeping force including, say, Austrian and Swedish troops?

A further consideration is the overriding need to consider the risks with utmost care.

Minesweeping in the Gulf is a bona fide operation; firing at Iranian motor torpedo-boats is another matter. That would be a fateful move, one that only a superpower can afford to make.

As a matter of principle the debate must be conducted in the open, not behind the cover provided by Basic Law but in the political arena where interests are considered and decisions reached.

The Federal Republic might do well to exercise restraint for years to come but shouldering international responsibility would do it no discredit.

Josef Joffe

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 4 May 1988)

Rethink needed of assumptions underlying defence strategies

Strategic deliberations in the West often tend to be somewhat macabre, especially when they are undertaken by civilians.

They do so not merely because they involve decisions that could be a matter of life or death for millions of people.

Military laymen may not be experts but they are none the less liable to be affected by the outcome of such deliberations.

They all too frequently gain the impression that such debates are held on a plane far removed from political reality.

What may have been no more than a vague surmise 10 years ago has taken clearer shape since Mr Gorbachov assumed power in the Kremlin.

Veterans of the Cold War may be untiring in their reminders that Mr Gorbachov may yet come to grief with his slogans of glasnost and perestroika. So he may.

But there can equally be no denying that a process of change began in the Soviet Union three years ago and has since made headway.

This is a fact that necessitates a radical reappraisal by all who hold positions of political responsibility in the West, as otherwise they stand to lag hopelessly behind the course of events.

The same goes for us simple citizens. As members of the general public we are certainly affected, and we must measure our leaders by the yardstick of whether and how they handle their allotted tasks.

For 40 years Western defence policy has been determined by the containment theory devised for President Truman by US diplomat George Kennan.

Its aim was to contain Stalin's policy of expansion in Europe, and in view of the West's post-war experience of Stalin's policy in Greece and Czechoslovakia defensive precautions, culminating in the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949, were only too understandable.

This Western policy of containment can now be said to have been a success. Soviet ardour to enlarge Moscow's sphere of influence in Europe may well have subsided after Stalin's death in 1953.

We will never know for sure, of course. The Warsaw Pact occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968 was certainly a poser; so was the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan 10 years ago.

Both may be taken to show that the Soviet Union has no compunction in resorting to aggression when it feels threatened and, as it sees it, in defence of Soviet interests.

But there has been little or no evidence in support of such surmises for the past three years, and the impending withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan is the surest sign yet of a change of mind in the Kremlin.

It is a change of mind that necessitates a military policy reappraisal in the West too.

Western defence policy, based on the concept of containment, relies on the idea of deterrence.

The overriding assumption on which Western military policy in its entirety is based is the tenet that the Soviet Union is preparing, planning and arguably intending to go ahead with a military attack on a Nato member-country.

"Just imagine there was a war," as a slogan of the peace movement in the Federal Republic put it, "and no-one went." For the purposes of the present argument this slogan must be amended to: "Just imagine the West continuing to deter when the East has no intention of attacking."

The West's entire defence policy would then be based on a mistaken assumption or, more accurately, it would be based on an assumption that used to be warranted but has ceased to be since 1985 at the latest.

Veterans of the Cold War, incapable of seeing world affairs in terms other than those of friend or foe, will object that this change has not been proved to have taken place.

This does not tally with the personal impressions gained by numerous Western politicians none of whom can be suspected in any way of political sympathy with the Soviet system.

US Senators, CDU Premier Lothar Späth of Baden-Württemberg, British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe, Willy Brandt and Deutsche Bank chief executive officer F. Wilhelm Christians are all agreed that Russia under Mr Gorbachov has embarked on a far-reaching change of Soviet policy that the West must take into account.

The idea of deterrence was the logical and, initially, legitimate answer to Moscow's threat of communist world revolution, which has long ceased to exist in that Stalin's immediate successors realised that it was no longer feasible.

In tacitly dispensing with this option Moscow has set aside the precondition for the aggression from which it was to be deterred. As a superpower the Soviet Union will naturally seek to look after its interests all over the world, and it will do so emphatically and skilfully and at times encounter resistance.

That has always been the case and may lead to other powers pursuing countervailing policies.

We will never have a world that is free of conflict, but it is *conceivable* and increasingly *essential* for all *states* to learn to forgo the use of force in pursuit of their interests.

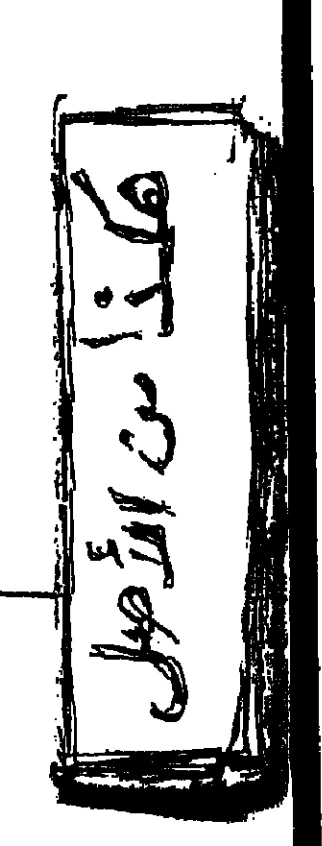
All Western visitors who have met and conferred with Mr Gorbachov, and done so without prejudging him, are convinced that he is willing to do so.

We shall see in the near future whether he is able to do so. There can be no reversing the trend he has initiated, however, so the West will need to think up something better and more appropriate to the age in which we live.

Tiliacus

(Nürnberger Nachrichten, 3 May 1988)

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■ THE ALLIANCE

CDU's subordinate role in foreign affairs analysed

Saarbrücker Zeitung

A book edited by CDU/CSU foreign-policy spokesman Volker Rühe begins by succinctly pointing out that there has not been a CDU or CSU Foreign Minister in Bonn for more than 22 years.

The CDU is beginning painfully to realise what has happened during these 22 years.

First, it lost the foreign-affairs portfolio; then, as the Opposition to the government led by Willy Brandt, it lost contact with the development of world politics; at the same time, it lost its image among voters as the party competent in foreign policy.

Helmut Kohl has only been able to improve the CDU's image partly. Hans-Dietrich Genscher (FDP), Bonn's ubiquitous Foreign Minister, is such an all-round expert that the CDU has been unable to gain a proper foothold.

The CDU has had men such as Kurt Georg Kiesinger, Karl Theodor von Gutenberg, Walther Leisler Kiep and Richard von Weizsäcker who could articulate their foreign policy expertise with rhetorical brilliance.

Today, no one apart from Rühe himself is capable of spelling out the party position with enough eloquence to make a public impact.

The main reason is that few want to move into a field where the scope for wielding influence is so limited.

This is surprising in view of the CDU and CSU tradition. What is more, it is a dangerous development in a country such as the Federal Republic of Germany, where foreign policy is perhaps more significant than in any other European country.

The CDU and CSU have already been forced to realise that a loss of competence is followed by a loss of voters.

Against this background the fact that Rühe and a number of parliamentary party colleagues have raised their voices to speak on behalf of "the new generation in the CDU/CSU" is not an everyday occurrence.

In a chapter dealing with the party's policies towards Latin America and human rights Werner Schreiber (CDU), a Bundestag MP from the Saarland, is very critical of both Bonn and Washington.

Rühe also makes a few digs in Hans-Dietrich Genscher's direction.

Although the book does not call for a revolution in the party it does indicate that the CDU/CSU is aware of a number of deficiencies and feels that the time has come to take them more seriously.

The CDU is astonishingly active in the field of developing its foreign policy awareness.

Its recent invitation to the Soviet ambassador to Bonn, Yuli Kvitsinski, and the US ambassador to Bonn, Richard Burt, to come along to a CDU foreign-policy congress was a clear signal that the party intends stepping up efforts in this field.

The party does not want to risk the kind of bitter defeat it suffered in the discussion on the double zero solution, a result of its lack of information on what Bonn's allies were thinking.

The fact that the CDU party congress in June will be holding a foreign policy debate for the first time since 1981 does not mean that the party is setting off to new programmatic shores.

This debate is necessary, since the understanding of foreign policy issues needs to be sharpened within the party itself. At the same time, an appraisal can be made of what government policy has achieved so far in the field of disarmament.

Furthermore, groundwork is needed for discussions on what still has to be done by the government with regard to the formulation of a security and disarmament policy concept in the alliance.

Significant move

The fact that the West started waiting with bated breath for even more new proposals by Mikhail Gorbachov made it clear that the loss of initiative is the *first result of the lack of foreign policy* imaginativeness.

In this context the appointment of Rupert Scholz as Bonn's new Defence Minister, a man who is not well-versed in defence policy matters, is a significant move.

Scholz is, however, familiar with the Deutschlandpolitik aspects of foreign policy. Outgoing Defence Minister Manfed Wörner tried to play an equivalent role in security and disarmament policy alongside Hans-Dietrich Genscher. He never quite managed to do so.

Helmut Kohl hopes that his successor will be more successful.

Volker Jacobs

(Saarbrücker Zeitung, 30 April 1988)

Nato ministers decide on modernisation

Nato Defence Ministers have decided to press ahead with plans to modernise short-range nuclear forces. The decision was taken at the Nato Planning Group meeting in Brussels. The 16 ministers backed a "step-by-step" approach to modernisation.

The Nato Defence Ministers parted company in an optimistic but not carefree mood.

After all, the signing of the INF agreement on the elimination of medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe has undoubtedly set a far-reaching process of disarmament in motion.

What is more, the finalisation of the Start agreement and the halving of nuclear intercontinental missiles are expected this year. Worries and fears, however, remain.

The Defence Ministers are convinced that the Soviet Union is still continuing to increase its arms potential — to an extent above and beyond what is needed for purely defence purposes.

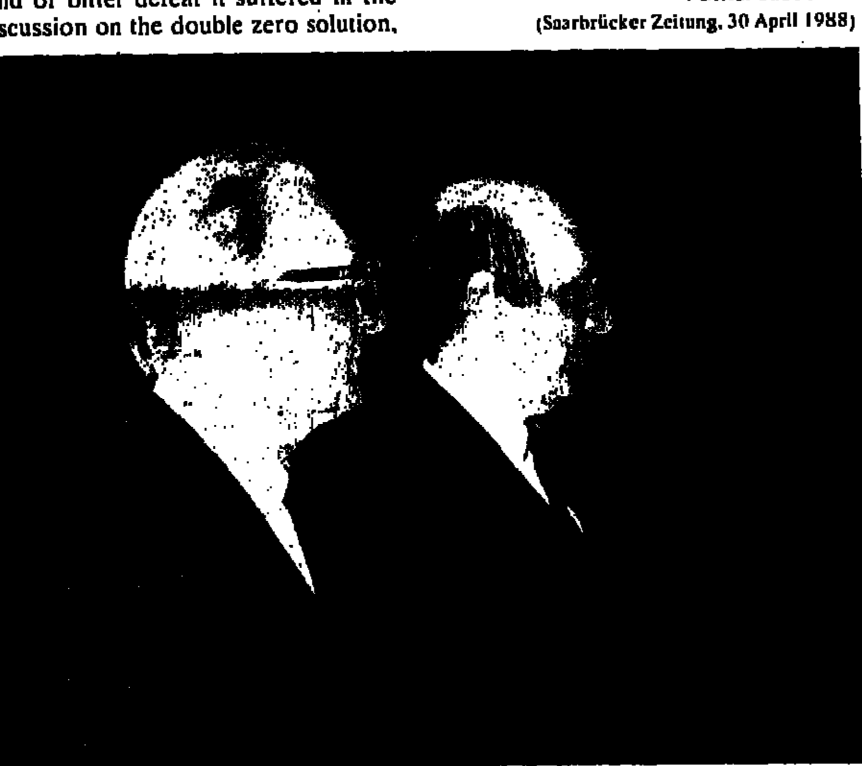
It is still not clear how Nato can respond militarily without burying the generally optimistic political relations between East and West.

By stating that nuclear armed forces must be "kept at the advisable level, wherever required" the Defence Ministers are merely reiterating the diplomatic formula forwarded at the Nato summit at the beginning of March.

It is a roundabout way of describing the still controversial question of how and when short-range nuclear missiles should be modernised.

Hans-Peter Ott

(Stuttgarter Nachrichten, 29 April 1988)



Lord Carrington, the outgoing Nato Secretary General (left) is farewelled by his successor, Bonn Defence Minister Manfred Wörner, in a ceremony at the Ministry of Defence in Bonn. (Photo: Bonn Defence Ministry)

Green light for bolt of lightning . . . a model of the European Fighter Aircraft (EFA). The real thing has passed the first cash hurdle. (Photo: dpa)

Euro fighter deal approved

The Bundestag defence committee has approved German backing for the European Fighter Aircraft (EFA) to replace the American Phantom. At first glance the decision cannot be financially justified.

The committee decision, which is the first cash hurdle, means that DM5.8bn will be freed for the project. Bonn will have to finance a further DM16.5bn to buy the 200 aircraft planned.

Germany's most expensive weapon system ever will cost taxpayers at least DM22.3bn.

Fighter aircraft with similar capabilities features could be bought much more cheaply from the United States.

But there are arguments in favour of Bonn's decision. The project could help the West German aviation industry as well as the various industries involved in building the aircraft in Britain, Italy and Spain to keep pace with international technological developments.

The single-seater is planned to replace the Phantom in the mid-1990s.

Then, of course, there is also the aspect of European and national independence from the USA.

The argument that buying the aircraft from the USA would not help create jobs in Germany should not be dismissed.

The tremendous investments in the new fighter aircraft will create jobs, many of them in the economically poor northern region of the Federal Republic.

After weighing up all the pros and cons the approval of the development and construction of the aircraft is justifiable. It is essential for defence policy reasons.

The "qualified" approval, however, should not disguise the existing financial misgivings and risks.

Experience has shown that the aviation industry is not able to provide cost calculations which are so reliable as to rule out the costs of improvements, modernisations at a later date.

It is also worth recalling the threat made by the outgoing Defence Minister, Manfred Wörner.

Last year Wörner threatened to drop the project altogether and buy fighter aircraft in the USA if the aviation industry did not show its willingness to exercise greater self-restraint as regards profits.

Bearing in mind this threat and the reservations of the Federal Audit Office there is cause for financial concern.

There is reason to believe that the in principle legitimate desire for profits combined with other "imponderables", such as the general increase in prices, currency uncertainties and the specific desires of difficult partners will trigger a costs explosion. This could place a heavy burden on the federal budget.

Bodo Schulte

(Nordwest Zeitung, Oldenburg, 5 May 1988)

■ GERMANY

Lack of money and resources leads to call for tighter asylum procedures

There are growing calls for Germany's liberal asylum laws to be tightened. Cash-strapped *Länder*, who pay asylum applicants living allowances until their cases are heard, are demanding that Bonn pays some of the bill. There are calls to ease the load by speeding up the process, which can take five years. Bonn Justice Minister Hans Engelhard wants applicants whose applications have failed (only about 10 per cent are successful) to be immediately deported. As Werner Birkenmaier reports in this article for *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, many unsuccessful applicants are allowed to remain on humanitarian grounds, or they simply disappear from sight — with authorities fearing the adverse publicity a tough line would bring.

The Federal Republic's political-asylum laws are the most liberal in the world.

Anyone who comes to Germany and claims that they are being politically persecuted can stay until the final decision has been reached — and that usually takes between four and five years.

Applicants receive welfare handouts while they wait and, even if their application is rejected, they are not necessarily deported.

But now, the liberal provisions are coming under increasing pressure. The *Länder*, which have to finance the payments, are finding it increasingly difficult to get hold of the cash.

Last year the total social assistance figure exceeded DM25bn, a large share of which was paid to asylum applicants.

Although there are no official statistics on the exact figure, realistic estimates by the *Land* Interior Ministers, which include the associated court costs, refer to over DM4bn.

During the latest Interior Minister conference one Interior Minister said the the northern *Länder* in particular were in deep financial trouble. There is private affluence in Germany but this is accompanied by a public poverty.

Many municipalities don't know where they are to find social security money.

All kinds of welfare institutions are being hit. This is why Lower Saxon Premier Ernst Albrecht (CDU) proposes that the Federal Government finance half the social assistance costs.

Is the problem likely to be solved at the expense of asylum applicants? There is no doubt that the Federal Republic will not stop granting asylum to the politically persecuted.

The problem, however, lies elsewhere. Not even 10 per cent of the applications for asylum are successful. Asylum laws have become a gateway for hidden immigration.

hy Germany is a magnet for refugees from poor countries. Their desire for asylum, however, is not covered by Article 16 of the West German constitution.

Applications from persons in this group, therefore, are generally rejected by the Federal Office for the Recognition of Political Refugees in Zirndorf (Bavaria).

Even though their applications have been rejected, however, many applicants stay in the country; they are either tolerated for humanitarian reasons or they disappear.

Bonn Justice Minister Hans Engelhard has urged the *Länder* to immediately deport persons whose application for asylum has been officially rejected.

But that is easier said than done. Some of the cases are tragic.

The authorities are reluctant to adopt a tough approach for fear of accusations of inhumanity by the media.

They are also under the moral pressure of religious groups and the trade unions. The law of large numbers requires some fundamental rethinking.

In addition to the renewed increase in the number of persons seeking political asylum there is a growing number of emigrants of German origin from East Bloc countries.

Although the latter have a different legal status right from the start they pose similar problems for the authorities.

Only the fact that the Interior Ministers are in financial straits and lack any alternative can explain why they have decided to deport the many Poles who come to the Federal Republic of Germany and hope to stay.

The Interior Ministers themselves must take the blame for developments in this field.

In August 1966 they agreed that asylum applicants from East Bloc countries must be given preferential treatment and allowed to stay in the country even if their application is rejected.

At that time there were only a few applicants from this area. During the first four months of 1988, on the other hand, almost 15,000 Poles came with the aim of staying here for good.

Many claim to be of German stock; if they can't prove it they simply hand in an application for political asylum.

Even more Poles are likely to come before the authorities start tightening up the provisions.

This means even more work for the Federal Office in Zirndorf, where 80,000 cases still have to be handled.

Baden-Württemberg Premier Lothar Späth expressed his "despair that we are unable to resolve the asylum problem."

As there is no sign of the majority needed to change the constitutional provisions the only alternative is to speed up the processing of applications and, wherever possible, deport those whose applications have been rejected.

Whatever they do the Interior Ministers will have to face up to the charge of inhumanity.

The head of the welfare institution of the Protestant Church, the *Diakonisches Werk*, recently called the practical application of the asylum laws in the Federal Republic of Germany inhumane.

He should take a look in his own backyard. Of the 25,500 applicants for asylum in Baden-Württemberg *only 16* are housed in church insitutions.

Werner Birkenmaier

(Stuttgarter Zeitung, 4 May 1988)

Perestroika's supposed ironic role in East Bloc exodus

The number of ethnic German migrants from East Bloc countries has been increasing so much that many centres are unable to provide enough temporary accommodation.

North Rhine-Westphalia, which has been allocated roughly 40 per cent of the emigrants, expects 50,000 arrivals this year, twice last year's figure.

Nation-wide, more than 120,000 are expected this year compared with fewer than 80,000 last year.

There has been a marked increase in emigrants from the Soviet Union, Poland and Romania.

One theory is that Mikhail Gorbachov's "perestroika" has made it easier for people to pluck up the courage needed to apply for an exit permit.

If the more lenient Gorbachov approach is generally accepted, experts expect the trend to continue.

There are still between three and four millions ethnic Germans in East Bloc countries (excluding East Germany). There are already 300,000 applications for exit permits.

As most of the emigrants want to live in a big city the West German municipalities face the toughest problems.

North Rhine-Westphalia's Ministry of Social Affairs claims that the biggest problem is to find buildings which can be turned into transit hostels at very short notice.

Although the costs are substantial the municipalities would on average get 70 per cent refunded by the *Länder*. North Rhine-Westphalia's budget indicates how the costs of accommodating emigrants have soared. A figure of DM5.5m was earmarked for these costs in the 1988 budget.

The supplementary budget has jacked up this figure by DM15m, and the relevant authorisation commitments which may be necessary next year will be increased from DM3m to DM18m.

If, as expected, the state assembly agrees, therefore, North Rhine-Westphalia will make an additional DM30m available for the temporary accommodation of emigrants.

Another example illustrates how serious the situation is.

Lower Saxony has been allocated an 8.2 per cent share of all emigrants, but has to finance the Friedland transit camp (annual costs: DM15m) on its own.

Altogether, Lower Saxony will be spending DM30m on emigrants this year.

Two of the seven million inhabitants in Lower Saxony are expellees, refugees, resettlers or former inhabitants of the GDR.

Whereas refugees from the GDR are given a refugee pass or a transit-camp certificate the emigrants are given an expellee card.

Both entitle the bearer to financial relief, for example, when applying for

Continued on page 6

■ PERSPECTIVE

Fighter against 'contaminated intellect'

The well-known photograph of Carl von Ossietzky and an SS man eyeing each other is world-famous. It features the victim and his torturer, the concentration camp inmate and his guard.

It is a picture that says more than any number of words; you don't even have to know who it is with his back to the wall, staunchly facing the uniformed thug at Esterwegen concentration camp.

He stood for countless unknown victims of Nazi barbarity. He had always seen himself in this role, even in the Weimar Republic.

On 23 November 1931 the Reich Supreme Court in Leipzig sentenced him as the editor of the political weekly *Die Weltbühne* to 18 months in prison for treason and the publication of military secrets.

He was sentenced in connection with an article about the clandestine build-up of an air force by the Reichswehr. It was clandestine because Germany was banned by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles from doing so, but it was very much an open secret.

As his co-editor and fellow-contributor to *Die Weltbühne*, Kurt Tucholsky, wrote, the conviction was the generals' revenge on Ossietzky and his magazine.

They had long been itching to get their own back on the militant pacifist and subsequent Nobel peace laureate.

Walter Kreiser, who wrote the offending article, left Germany to steer clear of the law. Not so Ossietzky: a few days before he reported to Tegel prison, Berlin, to serve his sentence he wrote the following words to explain why he preferred to stay:

"What an Opposition figure who leaves the country has to say will soon have a hollow ring. Exclusively political commentators in particular cannot, in the long term, do without the connection with everything for and against which he fights without overstepping the mark or getting his angles wrong.

"If you really want to effectively fight the contaminated intellect of a country you must share its general fate."

These were memorable words. Their truth was only too soon to be demonstrated when, after Hitler came to power, the mass exodus of German intellectuals began.

Ossietzky was the best-known political prisoner in the dying days of the Weimar Republic. "I must serve my term," he wrote before reporting to do so in May 1932, "because I am the most inconvenient behind bars."

He saw, as a further reason, the obligation he felt toward the "nameless proletarian victims of the Fourth Senate" (of the Reich Supreme Court). No-one except their comrades, he wrote, had paid them the slightest attention. In December 1932 he was released as part of a general amnesty, but two months later the Nazis arrested him in their round-up of Opposition intellectuals after the Reichstag fire. The Gestapo expressly referred to the Supreme Court's sentence in his arrest warrant:

"That Ossietzky came into conflict with the law in the Weimar Republic is surely enough to show how serious and heinous the agitation he practised must have been."

His illegal detention maintained an infamous continuity that began well before 1933 and by no means came to an end in 1945. He long seemed destined to be forgotten and doomed to oblivion in both post-war German states.

For decades no mention was made of a man his biographer Kurt R. Grossmann calls a "German patriot," a militant pacifist and member of the German Peace Society since 1913.

He was never a member of a political party and was not sparing in his criticism of the Communists and Social Democrats in his weekly leading articles in the columns of *Die Weltbühne*.

He failed to fit into the political landscape of the Cold War and to this day the 1936 Nobel peace prize-winner has not been granted the status he deserves as a resistance fighter and radical democrat.

His name resurfaced in the 1970s in connection with the undignified dispute over whether the new university in Oldenburg should be named after him.

The Christian Democratic Students' Union in Oldenburg vilified him as having championed the Popular Front and paved the way for Hitler.

These accusations were based on the words he spoke on 17 February 1933 at the last free meeting of the German Writers' Association.

Outlining his political viewpoint, he said he saw "nothing but allies to the left of us.

The flag to which I bear allegiance is no longer the black, red and gold tricolour of this degenerate republic but the banner of the united anti-Fascist movement."

He died 50 years ago, on 4 May 1938, after years of ill-treatment in concentration camp.

Several books about the man who was arguably the best-known journalist in the Weimar Republic have appeared to mark this anniversary.

Next year, to mark his birth centenary, Oldenburg University is to publish the first volume of a collected edition of his works.

May this, perhaps, mean hat the dispute over Carl von Ossietzky is over at last, a dispute which, only 10 years ago, Heinrich Albertz, the former SPD mayor of Berlin, saw as "symbolising the growing confusion of minds" and sounding a warning note of intellectual and political decline in the Federal Republic?

Manfred Rieger

(General-Anzeiger, Bonn, 3 May 1988)



Carl von Ossietzky (left, in concentration camp with guard) preferred to stay behind and confront. (Photo: dpa)

Review of legal profession's dismal record in Nazi era

The legal profession is taking a belated but thorough look at its own past, a past in which the years of warped justice during the Nazi regime were long excused as a mere slip.

Guilt was styled destiny, lack of civic courage an inescapable entanglement.

It is greatly to Federal Justice Minister Hans Engelhard's credit that he has not stopped wondering why the law stooped to become Hitler's accomplice. The first official report on the subject was issued by his Ministry four years ago.

It has now subsidised a comprehensive review and subtle analysis of the subject by political scientist and historian Lothar Gruchmann.

His *Justiz im Dritten Reich 1933-1940* (Justice in the Third Reich from 1933 to 1940) deals with the years of "Adjustment and Subjugation," to quote Gruchmann's sub-title, under the aegis of Reich Justice Minister Franz Gürtner.

The DM70,000 the Ministry contributed toward the cost of publishing the book is hardly worth mentioning. What is worth noting is that this financial commitment lends expression to a realisation.

It is the realisation that looking for mistakes made, explaining circumstances, regretting guilt and arriving at an understanding of the facts is important for the self-assessment of the present legal system.

Judges and public prosecutors have sought for several years, at their respective academies in Trier, to come to terms with the facts.

They will not always have found it easy to arrive at the conclusion that the entire legal profession was so uncritical in its belief in the state and so lacking in moral fibre in the Nazi era.

The Bonn Justice Ministry plans to hold a wide-ranging exhibition, to be shown in cities all over the country, illustrating how the profession played its part in perverting the legal system.

At the German Judges' Academy in Trier Herr Engelhard plans to inaugurate a monument. It will, he says, be aimed at the legal profession, remining it that the rule of law is destroyed when its principles are breached on political grounds.

That is the topic of Gruchmann's 1,297-page book. Using source material that for the most part has not previously been available in print, he outlines the progression from an initial congruence of interests partly shared by the legal profession and the Nazi regime to the profession's meek and unresisting abandonment of constitutional principles.

He shows how the profession, from a position of proximity to an authoritarian state, came to accept the exemption of Nazi lawmakers from being bound by constitutional requirements.

It simply stopped reviewing the compatibility of Nazi legislation with constitutional standards.

The Reich Justice Ministry uninhibitedly rode roughshod over the constitution, no longer acknowledging an authority greater than that of the political leadership.

It did so partly of its own accord, partly in advocating an unrestricted interpretation of the law and partly at the behest of Nazi leaders, as in connection with legislation purportedly protecting German blood.

The Ministry had so few misgivings about proclaiming legislation that had retroactive effect that they were soon and readily dismissed.

Franz Gürtner, the Minister, symbolised the entire profession. He was an able lawyer, nationalist and anti-liberal in outlook. He was Bavarian Justice Minister for 10 years before serving Hitler as Reich Justice Minister until he died in 1941.

Gürtner was competent and enjoyed the trust and confidence of the profession.

Like his leading Ministry officials, he favoured an authoritarian state and was opposed to what he dismissed as "liberalistic" legal viewpoints.

He was all in favour of abandoning constitutional principles in the pursuit of "national" objectives. He and his Ministry had no objections to the police imprisoning detainees without trial; they approved of the idea — in what, of course, purported to be exceptional circumstances.

By the time Gürtner was aware of the consequences the police and the SS were firmly in control.

Very few judges and public prosecutors in the Third Reich can be singled out as men whose conduct was exemplary, and next to no-one has ever heard of them, not even in the legal profession.

There are no photographs of them on show in court buildings. Lothar Kreyssig, a judge from Flöha in Saxony, was one of them.

Herr Engelhard mentioned him in his speech marking the presentation of Gruchmann's book.

As a committed Christian he came into conflict with the Nazi party in 1935 for

Süddeutsche Zeitung

publicly supporting his hard-pressed Church.

The *Reichsstatthalter* of Saxony inaugurated dismissal proceedings. Kreyssig, who was employed as a judge in Chemnitz at the time, showed no sign of knuckling under as the dismissal proceedings dragged on.

He left the courtroom when a Hitler speech was relayed by radio. He left the courtroom when a photograph of the *Führer* was unveiled.

In 1937 he applied for a transfer to Brandenburg. In 1940, when he came into contact with the Nazis' euthanasia programme, he refused the medical profession permission to transfer his wards without his prior permission as chancery judge.

He even filed murder proceedings against person or persons unknown with the chief public prosecutor.

On several occasions he travelled to Berlin and took State Secretary Freisler and Minister Gürtner personally to task in connection with the murder of the mentally ill.

He refused to be fobbed off. He refused to repeal his orders. He was compulsorily retired in July 1942.

Herr Engelhard feels the review of legal history in the Nazi era is still in its early days.

Part of the work will be to rescue from oblivion the few examples of conduct as exemplary as that of Lothar Kreyssig.

The aim of remembering them is not to distract attention from the throngs of fellow-travellers, hangmen and their henchmen, but to "recall the example they set."

Heribert Prantl

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 20 April 1988)

■ LABOUR

Divided comrades enliven May Day

The truth of the matter is that May Day, 1 May, was becoming something of a bore. It was always the same ritual.

In the Federal Republic, the trade unions would organise trips into the open countryside where their supporters could enjoy spring weather and the returning green of the landscape.

This ensured that at least in the morning they would show solidarity with the union bosses and listen to speeches, which usually had little to do with human life, booming out over loudspeakers.

In East Germany, there were May Day parades. People who had been carefully chosen by their firm marched in organised joy past functionaries lined up on the tribunal, acting out the sham of how happy and satisfied working men and women are in the first German workers' and farmers' state.

But. But, now this mendacious idyll is a thing of the past. The dissimilar legacies of Karl Marx and August Bebel have got the almost 100-year worker-movement struggle into a bit of a spin.

Instead of the usual powerful and verbose demonstrations against class antagonists, the comrades are divided among themselves.

The First of May is tense like it hasn't been for years.

In East Berlin the self-proclaimed workers' leaders were nervous for days before-hand.

State security officials were posted in the streets. Well-known critics of the regime were rounded up and intimidated either with prison terms or fines.

The East German leadership was terrified that opposition groups would comingle in the procession, as in January, and wave banners demanding freedom for people who thought differently to the leadership or called for their constitutional rights.

Actually this had a comic effect. The communists have all the levers of power firmly in their hands yet they feared small groups, armed with nothing more than their thoughts and private speech.

Their anxiety was justified. These rebels are scratching at the very foundations of the functionaries' dictatorship.

People in East Berlin no longer allow themselves to be pressed into a collective corset and be dictated to by ideologists about how they should live.

The Federal Republic branch of the worker movement is immune to dictatorial temptation.The SPD and the trade unions were always in the forefront of the battle for parliamentary democracy.

But even here opposition is seldom welcomed by the leadership. Trade union officials do not suffer deviants gladly among their own ranks, whether they stand independently as candidates for workers councils or just make known their discomforting views that do not toe the party line. Norbert Blüm and Oskar Lafontaine have both suffered in this respect. Hermann Rappe, an SPD member of the Bundestag and secretary of the German Trade Union Confederation (in German DGB), and his colleagues would like to muzzle Oskar.



Rheinhausen steelworks works council head, Manfred Bruckschen (left) and North Rhine-Westphalian Premier, Johannes Rau, who acted as mediator between employees and Krupp, tell the Press the bad news. See story at right.
(Photo: dpa)

They would prefer not to invite him to a trade union meeting where he could defend his views. It is also much more satisfactory to give people a piece of one's mind without opposition.

Otherwise it would be difficult to explain away to the public the disputes among the comrades. What is bad about Lafontaine's proposal that workers must take pay cutbacks if they work less so that the jobless can be given a job?

This had been said by others before Lafontaine said it and it was not bitterly denounced by trade union bosses then.

Franz Steinkühler, IG Metall boss, the metalworkers union, has pointed out with commendable frankness, what was Lafontaine's worst offence. Steinkühler said that Lafontaine had used the opposition's, that is the employers', arguments.

The trade unions conduct themselves like a jealous husband who thinks he has caught his wife being unfaithful to him. The unions have been used to regarding the SPD as the good, little wife in the home who in political matters says and does what the unions lay down as the right thing.

It was like this in issues such as the trade-union real-estate organisation, Neue Heimat, or the Rheinhausen steelworks, shop closing times, regulations controlling strikes or worker participation in the coal and steel industry. The SPD went along with the Trade Union Confederation without a murmur.

But the SPD could not count on being rewarded when they themselves needed help. If it suited the trade unions, the party would even let a Social Democrat Chancellor out in the cold. This happened with the public services union boss Heinz Kluncker in 1974 with Willy Brandt; and with the whole of the Trade Union Confederation in 1982 when Helmut Schmidt wanted to make economies in the budget.

The younger generation of SPD politicians have come to realise that they must give up ideas of forming a government for ever if they limit themselves to the trade union bastion.

The SPD only has a future if it becomes a people's party, attractive to salaried employees, housewives and people of an independent turn of mind, but not as a party for a particular interest, a diminishing number of workers in industry.

The trade unions can take calmly the SPD's emancipation and tell themselves that even a changed SPD in government would be better for them than the present coalition.

There are reasons for this. The worker movement has always been threatened by high unemployment. It limits the unions' fighting powers.

The Confederation of Trade Union's plans for dealing with unemployment have foundered. The DGB made a wrong move when it said that the government and employers were responsible for mass unemployment. That is only a part of the truth.

The number of workers in employment is, of course, dependent on wage agreements. The more security given to a man in work and the more he earns the less chances there are for the unemployed.

The collective network, which the trade unions have created over the past few decades, gives protection to the mass of workers but reduces the attraction of the trade unions for more and more citizens, whose personal needs are not catered for by the unions' mass coverage.

Workers, who want promotion because they have additional qualifications, the self-employed, men and woman who do not want full-time jobs and even the unemployed find that what the unions have to offer is irrelevant.

The workers' movement, which has developed so differently in the East and the West, is in a crisis. This is linked to trade union change that cannot be handled with the methods applied in the past and which demands new answers.

The search for new answers would be an attractive task for 1 May.

Wolfgang Mauersberg
(Hannoversche Allgemeine, 30 April 1988)

Continued from page 4

loan. The reception of the immigrants and the associated commitments are outlined in Article 116 of the West German constitution and in the Federal Expellee Act.

The claim to be a German is checked in the three transit camps in Bavaria, Hesse and Lower Saxony.

Migrants must provide documents from their parents or grandparents.

"It is obvious that mistakes can be made," said one Lower Saxony government official.

Yet he emphasised that there are relatively few cases of deliberate deceit.

According to the North Rhine-Westphalia Ministry for Social Affairs the migrants are not a great substantial burden for the municipalities.

Migrants are given parity treatment as regards unemployment insurance.

The length of employment in their native countries is treated as if that employment had taken place in the Federal Republic.

Most migrants are thus entitled to unemployment money or at least unemployment assistance.

Social assistance, which has to be financed by the municipalities, is only paid in relatively few cases.

Rudolf Bauer
(Rheinische Post, Düsseldorf, 28 April 1988)

Lost fight: end for a Krupp steelworks

The Krupp steelworks at Rheinhausen are to be shut down. There will be no more steel produced there after 1990. The workers have lost the battle to save the plant.

That was to be expected. They never had a chance, even though trade union officials, politicians and ministers tried to talk the workers into believing otherwise.

The steel works have been running at a loss involving millions for a long time. No company can put up with that for long.

A slow, cautious end is intended for the Rheinhausen steelworks, which the labour force should be able to bear. An agreement has been drawn up, which has materialised after long, tough negotiations with the help of the North Rhine-Westphalia Premier, Johannes Rau.

Krupp and Mannesmann have agreed the compromise. In principle so has IG Metall, the metalworkers union, and the workers' council.

The workers have been taken by surprise by this development. They may have to give their blessing to the loss of their jobs.

Rheinhausen workers occupied bridges and blockaded roads. In Essen they were guilty of trespass and offended against regulations concerning the inviolability of legislature buildings, in this case the state parliament in Düsseldorf.

Pickets were organised and there was no work done because of wildcat strikes. But all was in vain.

The same politicians who had egged them on have agreed with Krupp management to the steelworks' closure.

The Rheinhausen steelworks are to cease production but this is to be a much slower process than was originally planned.

It seems to have been primarily a political decision that the works should be given a reprieve and not one made on economic grounds.

In explanation Rau said that public order had to be restored and a little confidence brought back to the region.

If this should come about he will profit the most. State elections will take place in North Rhine-Westphalia at the latest in 1990 and Premier Rau has an absolute SPD majority to defend.

More than 2,000 will be offered jobs in Huckingen, where Krupp and Mannesmann will together operate a steelworks.

The others will not be jobless. In a unique, joint plan Bayer in Leverkusen and Henkel in Düsseldorf have agreed to provide jobs.

There is in addition a chance for several hundred Rheinhausen workers to retire at 55. They will be offered up to 90 per cent of their annual net wages and benefits in redundancy pay.

Rheinhausen is not a unique case in the Ruhr. If the peaceful solution of this case succeeds it could have an infectious effect.

Rheinhausen could be an example of politicians, trade union officials and employers working together for the benefit of a region. The chance is there.

Hans Wolf
(Nordwest Zeitung, Oldenburg, 4 May 1988)

■ THE ECONOMY

Action needed to correct a long-term weakness

This year's spring report on the economic outlook by five leading economic research institutes makes two main points.

- First, action is needed to remedy long-term economic weakness, not just a passing hiccup in the economic cycle.
- Second, money supply policy has gone as far as it can; it is now for finance, wage and welfare policy to set growth and employment trends.

The short-term outlook as forecast by the five institutes, DIW in Berlin, HWWA in Hamburg, Ifo in Munich, IW in Cologne and RWI in Essen, should please economic policymakers.

Estimated real economic growth bears out the optimistic view that last October's stock market crash would not put the industrialised economies out of their stride.

That alone does not amount to much, although a consumer-based economic recovery may help the parties in power to survive the next round of elections.

It is not, however, a token of assured long-term competitiveness, reliable prosperity and a thorough improvement in the labour market situation.

There are good reasons why the authors chose to add to the relatively reassuring forecast for 1988 a preview of 1989.

Views may naturally differ on the forecasts made, but experts uniformly agree on the trend, which is that real growth in 1989 will be lower than 1988.

That is a sure sign of economic weakness. The national product may increase regularly for years on end, but statistics cannot show that it will continue

Indeed, growth rates, productivity and investment statistics all show a long-term downward trend. They are still growing, but more slowly.

That entails the risk of stagnation — resulting not from market saturation but from the many limits to growth imposed by politicians and both sides of industry, enveloping the economic cycle like a cocoon.

What lessons must politicians learn from the findings? Many governments use money supply policies to give the economy a "shot in the arm." This can backfire.

Money supply may have a salutary, "shock" effect on production, but pump priming is invariably followed, sooner or later, by inflation.

This lesson from the past has been learnt. Money supply policies in the leading industrial countries, especially in the United States, are not aimed at expansion.

Central banks are trying, with some success, to gear growth in money supply to stability targets. Liquidity pumped into the markets after Black Monday has been largely recovered.

The signs are that money supply policy as pursued by the United States, which leads the pack of countries with freely convertible currencies, will remain geared to stability after the US Presidential election in November.

What that means for German money supply policy is that there is no external need, if the forecast is right, to supply the economy with more money.

There is no real need to resort to money supply policy manoeuvres to counteract any further real revaluation of the deutschemark; they would merely run the risk of stepping up the pace of inflation.

What that means for politicians is that money supply policy is not the be-all and end-all of stabilising the economy and boosting growth; finance, wage and welfare policies must deliver the goods.

No-one would now deny that wage and welfare policies which tend to increase costs have paralysed growth factors and prevented restoration of a satisfactory level of employment.

Monopoly interests pursued by politicians and the two sides of industry have so far prevented action from being taken on this realisation.

The warnings sounded by the five economic research institutes may have a note of prayer-wheel repetitiveness, but that is hardly due to a mere lack of imagination on their part.

Another point they make that isn't a new idea (but is supported by somewhat surprising estimates) is the recommendation to go ahead with the major features of the proposed tax reform package before 1990 and give the economy a fillip as soon as possible.

Reversion to a heavy increase in the public sector borrowing requirement has so far been a counter-argument that has carried weight.

Which is more lastingly effective, the invigorating effect of more tolerable taxation or the paralysing effect of swiftly growing government debts?

The report says both may now be possible, due to higher Bundesbank profits and growing tax revenue.

In other words, the tax cuts can be brought forward *and* the public sector borrowing requirement can be kept to within limits that do not have a detrimental effect on the investment climate.

The figures must not all be taken as gospel: neither the overall economic forecasts nor the figures on which economic recommendations are based.

The institutes do not, for a moment, suggest that they should. But politicians and economic decision-makers would do well to at least try and get the message contained in the spring 1988 report.

If they were then to take a fairly unprejudiced look at the recommendations, economic and wage policies would stand to benefit.

Hans D. Barbier
(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 2 May 1988)

Disagreement on tax-cut advice

The proposal by the five leading economic research institutes to bring forward to 1989 the tax reform package planned for 1990 has, for the most part, not been viewed kindly by the business community.

Most industrial and commercial organisations have voiced scepticism about the institutes' financial proposals and their pessimistic assessment of the economic outlook for 1989.

The Confederation of German Industry (BDI) is not in favour of bringing the tax cuts forward because it has "misgivings" about the forecast for next year made in the institutes' spring 1988 report, issued on 2 May.

The Standing Conference of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHT) doubts whether the reform package *can* be brought forward at this stage and suggests considering a postponement of higher indirect taxes to finance higher European Community spending.

The report forecasts an economic growth rate of two per cent this year and 1.25 per cent in 1989, which might arguably be boosted to 2.5 per cent by bringing forward the tax reform package and dispensing with higher indirect taxes.

The German Savings Bank Association says the finance policy moves counselled by the economic research institutes will only be needed if growth next year is really as low as forecast.

The pessimistic estimate made in the report is not accounted for in detail, the bankers note.

The Association of German Craft and Trade Associations says the proposal is desirable "in principle," but it must not lead to an increase in value-added tax or an even earlier increase in other indirect taxes.

Most organisations feel the forecast for 1988 is realistic. The Confederation of German Employers' Associations adds that the cost effect of recent, in some cases longer-term, wage agreements must now, as far as possible, be offset by flexible working hours.

The Federal Association of German Cooperative Banks is worried that the proposed withholding tax and higher indirect taxes might trigger an economic setback next year that could easily be avoided.

vwd
(Hamburger Abendblatt, 3 May 1988)

Alternative economic report wears a threadbare look

While the five leading economic research institutes were still pondering over their annual spring survey in Berlin, the so-called alternative economists had already presented their report.

They may have been quicker off the mark with their forecasts, but they need not necessarily be nearer the mark. Many signs indicate that the economic downturn they forecast will not happen.

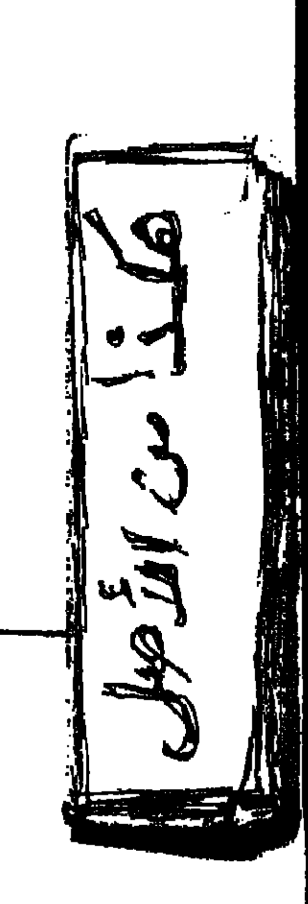
Mechanical engineering, the linch-pin of German industrial investment, has just presented extremely encouraging order books.

Experts who are as much as suspected of taking an ideologically blinkered view of the economic outlook are unlikely to find their economic policy proposals viewed at all confidently. Scepticism is also engendered by the somewhat threadbare apprearance of some of the alternative recommendations made.

Year after year the alternative economists submit the same proposals for comprehensive public sector spending. Many commentators merely shrug their shoulders when these old standbys are trundled out yet again.

Sad to say, there is no real interface between the official spring survey and the alternative report. Competition between the experts might point the way toward a reduction in the intolerably high rate of unemployment.

(Stuttgarter Zeitung, 29 April 1988)



■ FINANCE

Leisured classes abandon the lottery for bigger thrills of the stock market

The high point of the week for millions of people is a televised lottery *draw on Saturday nights. Many people* invest modest amounts in the hope of getting six numbers out of 49 right — and packing their bags and heading for the sunshine forever.

Most of the time, it's back to the grind on Monday and better luck next week. It doesn't cost much and it's difficult to go broke.

The number of people seeking a greater kick — more ventured for more (hopefully) gained — is growing. They are discovering a new game: big stakes but with a daily payout on the winning numbers. It's called the stock market.

Many take the view that stocks and shares are less a matter of luck than of specialist knowledge, experience and a nose for a good bet.

The growing enthusiasm for playing the market has, strangely enough, not been dampened by the crash on Black Monday, 19 October 1987.

Reports about the winners on Black Monday, and there undoubtedly must have been some, have made the rounds among small investors.

People with access to the action on international stock exchanges and mini-investors are all convinced of one truth: anything goes. You only need to know how and when to move.

More than four million Germans own stocks or shares. Interest in investing in shares has grown a lot over the past few years.

There is more leisure time than ever which has been matched by an increase in the readiness to indulge in a flutter on the stock exchange.

There are large sections of society with the cash to play; and this is matched by an increasing urge to play.

Dallas and *Dynasty* have portrayed battles of business as attractive, turbulent, underhand and exciting. It is not surprising that many people read newspaper financial news with the same feeling as they do when they have title deeds in the game of Monopoly.

Books such as Willi H. Grün's *Geld verdienen mit Aktien*, described by the publishers as "a stock exchange best-seller," *has sold in the tens of thousands.*

Private investment clubs are getting increasingly popular in the Federal Republic. There are now about three thousand of these clubs with a total membership of about 80,000.

Members get together in their free-time to talk about stock exchange opportunities, look at the latest prices of their club shares quoted, celebrate when speculations come off and bemoan their rotten lot when they lose.

Apart from piling up shares spare-time investors acquire a considerable amount of specialist knowledge about options or line charts, price-earnings ratios or stocks transferable only with the company's consent, profit-sharing certificates or stop-loss orders.

The time when stock exchange jargon was only understood by the old hands is long past.

Willi H. Grün wrote about it vividly. "When someone talks about Braune *Hanne on the floor of the stock ex*change the dealer is not referring to a brown beer or a lovely brunette who can be reached by telephone, but about the Braunschweig-Hannover Hypothekenbank."

Grün gave another example: "A cry of 50 Gute at the end of trading in Berlin is not a funny way of saying goodbye but simply shares from Gutehoffnungshütte, the Oberhausen steel giant."

An investment swindler such as Bernie Cornfeld, who 15 years ago did very well from his sales methods, would not be very successful today.

More and more people want to get a sniff of the air on the stock exchange. It is surprising, in fact, that no travel agencies have specialised in this new group of stock-market tourists.

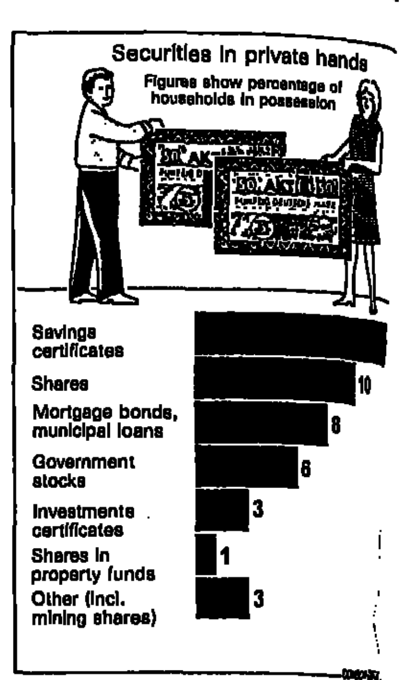
Even if, despite local stock-market knowledge and book learning one has *no success with marks and pfennings* there are plenty of comforters for the would-be or unsuccessful speculator.

Author Grün tells about Professor Carl-Friedrich Gauss of Göttingen University, a genius with figures.

Grün wrote: "Because he wanted to augment his salary as a professor he speculated on the stock exchange. He lost everything. If you also are not successful in earning money on the stock exchange you have one consolation: you are undoubtedly a wiser person."

Although this knowledge can have a calming effect, who wants to lose? There are anyway enough excuses on the stock exchange floor to explain individual belly or crash landings.

Could it be the weakness of the dollar, Third World indebtedness or the war in the Persian Gulf? Could it be because of the management or mismanagement of a favoured company or was it a lack of foresight by trade unions that spoiled everything?



Political and social factors nearly far have a bearing on whether international stock markets are bearish or bullish.

Now an active auxiliary supplier has come up with a gadget that can aid investors to be successful.

The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* asks: "What does the status-conscious yuppy now have in his pocket?" The answer: Forex Spot (65 x 95 x 15mm) offers Swiss citizens a special service for an annual hire fee of Sf2,400.

A glance at the digital mini-gadget shows the latest dollar exchange rate, the current price of gold and trends on Wall Street. The latest stock exchange information is fed into the mini-gadget twenty-four hours a day.

It will be interesting to see what speculators are offered in the coming years. And how long the sufferers and *victims will put up with this.*

Horst Peter Wickel

(Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, Hamburg, 24 April 1988)

No more 'social rebate' in privatisation

VIAG, an industrial holding company, is the latest company to come under the government's privatisation programme.

Preussag was the first company to be privatised. That was in 1960. Shares were widely taken up because a discount was allowed to low-income buyers.

This so-called social discount was available when Volkswagen shares were offered to the public in 1961. Discounts for low-income earners were between 10 and 25 per cent.

Many VW shareholders have been delighted at the meteoric rise in the price of their shares. It was the expectation that the shares would rise that made them so popular.

But the rise has given many newcomers to the stock market illusions about how easy it is to get rich with stocks and shares.

There are signs, however, that all good things come to an end. Social dis*counts are no longer* being made available. Shares are now being sold at quoted stock-exchange prices.

Officially regulative policies are given as the reasons for privatisation but finances also come into it. The privatisation of VIAG will bring in DM1.16bn at current market prices.

The Bonn government will be killing three birds with one stone. The government wants a wider distribution of productive wealth, a reduction in state involvement in the private sector and relief for central government's budget and public borrowing requirement problems.

It is not surprising then that the call should be to sell off government assets. Nothing is being given away by this.

It is better though for the state to realise on its assets than to tax people. Every private person or businessman who is in a financial corner realises on assets.

The future will show just how good investment in VIAG will be. VIAG shares showed a profit last year, despite the trend after the stock market crash.

It seems that the time to privatise has been well chosen. *Paul Kronberg*

(Bremer Nachrichten, 3 May 1988)

Beer and wurst as gymn-shoe bank opens for business

The *Ökobank*, or Ecology Bank, has finally opened for business. It took four years of wading through thickets of banking regulations to get the go-ahead.

So to mark its official recognition as a commercial bank, it turned on rock music, wurst and beer as business began in Frankfurt. The bank is already known as the gym-shoe bank because of how customers dress.

The party attracted some lofty interest: two directors of the central bank, the Bundesbank, turned up to wish the new venture well.

Doris Mohr, a 46-year-old housewife, opened the first savings account with a deposit of DM200.

She said that she had opened the account because she did not want her savings to be used to finance arms deals and nuclear energy.

The Federal Supervisory Office for Credits in Berlin has given the bank a licence on strict conditions.

It cannot open any branch offices and only three times its paid-up capital of DM7.7m can be offered out in credits.

Customers opening savings accounts will be helped if they need cash for "alternative" projects.

Interest rates are between three and 4.5 per cent, but savers can waive a part of their interest in favour of alternative projects. *Peter Wellin*

(Stuttgarter Nachrichten, 2 May 1988)



Hark, the öko-ing sounds of money . . . the *Ökobank* at work. (Photo: AP)

■ RAIL TRANSPORT

Half-as-fast-as-an-airliner speedster brings back the world record

Vehicles have always been assessed mainly in terms of their speed. The train was soon overtaken by the motor car, which itself was overtaken even faster by the aeroplane. But the railways are back in the running.

On May Day Deutsche Bundesbahn, the German Federal Railways, proudly announced the first German world speed record for track vehicles in 57 years.

The ICE, short for Inter-City Experimental, powered by twin 11,400-hp *three-phase current electric engines*, had travelled at 406.9 kph, or just over 250mph.

That was a mere five kilometres per hour slower than the 412-kph record set up in January by its hovercraft competitor, the Transrapid.

Bundesbahn officials enthusiastically claim that the ICE is half as fast as an airliner and twice as fast as a car.

Rail speed records are evidently a matter of national pride and prestige, with three countries vying for pride of place.

The previous record, 380kph, was set up by the French TGV, short for *train à grande vitesse*, or high-speed





train, in 1981. The Japanese have now announced that their experimental hovertrain, the Maglev, will soon reach 500kph, or 300mph.

Its top speed so far, on a seven-kilometre (four-mile) test track, is 352kph (220mph).

In three years the Shinkansen ser*vice between Tokyo and Morioka will* run at top speeds of roughly 300kph, the Japanese Transport Minister says.

That would make it the fastest regular rail service in the world. Even if the ICE retains its speed record it will not normally travel faster than 250kph.

Bundesbahn officials frankly admit that it would be uneconomic to run at higher speeds.

The Bundesbahn spent years preparing for the new record, which was set up on the new section of permanent way between Hanover and Würzburg.

In November 1985 the ICE clocked up 317kph, followed six months later by 385kph on a Munich testbed.

Six months later still it travelled at 345kph in the open, as it were, and only a few days before the record-breaking test run it reached an unofficial 404kph.

The rolling stock — axles, chassis or engine capacity — is not the problem. The power supply is the chief technical obstacle to still higher speeds.

The high-tension wires were plied with even higher tension for the record-breaking run, while the current collector, or trolley, was fitted out with a kind of spoiler to ensure constant contact.

The Bundesbahn has ordered 41 ICE locomotives. They are intended for use between Hanover and Würzburg and between Mannheim and Stuttgart from 1991.

They will increase the average speed of Inter-City services from 108 to 160kph, or 100mph, cutting travelling time between Hamburg and Munich by an hour and a half.

Bundesbahn chief executive Reiner Gohlke hopes this performance will net the railways 30 per cent more passengers.

The world record run cost DM77m. The Federal Research Ministry contributed DM44m, the Bundesbahn DM17m and industrial manufacturers associated with the ICE project a further DM16m. *Andreas Abs*

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 3 May 1988)

Whoosh! The Inter-City Experimental. (Photo: Deutsche Bundesbahn)

Rapid-service links with cities in Holland proposed

Eurocity train services have been proposed that would link Amsterdam and Rotterdam with Cologne in two, and with Frankfurt in three hours.

Details of the plans were outlined in Arnhem, Holland, by German and Dutch chambers of commerce as sponsors of the project.

Dr von Ilsemann, vice-president of the German-Dutch Chamber of Commerce in The Hague, foresaw Eurocity express services linking Holland and Cologne (and places further south) in a few years' time.

The distance between Rotterdam and Cologne is 260km by rail. The *route crosses the territory of seven* chambers of commerce: Amsterdam, Arnhem, Duisburg, Düsseldorf, Essen, Rotterdam and Utrecht.

The seven expect the two-hour rail link to lead to a 100-per-cent in the number of passengers carried by the turn of the century.

Businessmen and trade fairs visitors must be enabled to travel to and from commercial centres on the Rhine and in the Ruhr in a single day.

Tourists also stand to benefit from improved services. Proposals are to be presented at the next European railway timetable conference in September.

Two-hour services will not be feasible until the early 1990s, however.

Improvements to the permanent way should, in the medium term, enable trains to travel at 200kph, thus attracting motorists who at present can outpace the train.

Locomotives or railcars would also be needed that can be converted from the Bundesbahn's AC to the DC used by *the Dutch Railways.*

The chambers see as their long-term objective a comprehensive network of high-speed rail links between Holland and the Rhine-Ruhr region in the *north to Milan in the south and*, via Hanover, to industrial areas in south Germany and Austria.

A spokesman for the German Transport Ministry has said Bonn is prepared to negotiate with the Dutch *once the project has been costed and* checked for profitability.

A spokesman for a German chamber of commerce said the capital outlay, "a few hundred million marks," was reasonable in comparison with the billions invested in new sections of permanent way by the Bundesbahn.

dpa

(General-Anzeiger, Bonn, 29 April 1988)

We'll wait and see, say buyers about high-speed hovertrain

Technically the German hovertrain system, the Transrapid, designed and built by Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm, Krauss-Maffei and Thyssen Industrie Henschel (as head of the consortium), is the best in the market.

A few weeks ago it set up a world record speed, for a working hovertrain, of 412.6kph (257mph) on the 31.5km test track in the Emsland region, near the Dutch border.

In September last year the Japanese MLU 002 travelled at 352kph on a seven-kilometre (four-mile) test track.

A 50-km (30-mile) test track is under construction near Miyazaki. It will be used for regular passenger services as well as test runs.

No-one can yet say whether the first firm order for a Transrapid is imminent. Potential foreign buyers are inclined to wait until the hovertrain is in operation in the Federal Republic.

German politicians have sounded most enthusiastic about the idea but many difficulties lie ahead before there can be realistic hopes of this coming about.

Experts estimate that German know-*how is still three to five years ahead of* that of the Transrapid's Japanese competitors.

The consortium decided jointly with the Bonn Research Ministry and independent experts, in favour of the EMS *hovertrain system in 1977.*

Impartial experts feel the German electromagnetic system is superior to the EDS, or electrodynamic, system preferred by the Japanese.

Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm, a partner in the German consortium, says the system's advantages are:

- a top speed of up to 500kph (300mph);
- electromagnets ensuring that the train really does hover (and does not come into contact with the guiderail);
- linear propulsion and inductive power supply;
- the ability to negotiate gradients of up to 1 in 10;
- a narrow turning-circle, enabling the track to be laid more flexibly;

Handelsblatt

- low power consumption and investment outlay;
- and economic running costs.

Views will differ on whether running the train in mid-air between concrete *pylons, like a worm winding through the* countryside, is a mere "minor inroad into the environment."

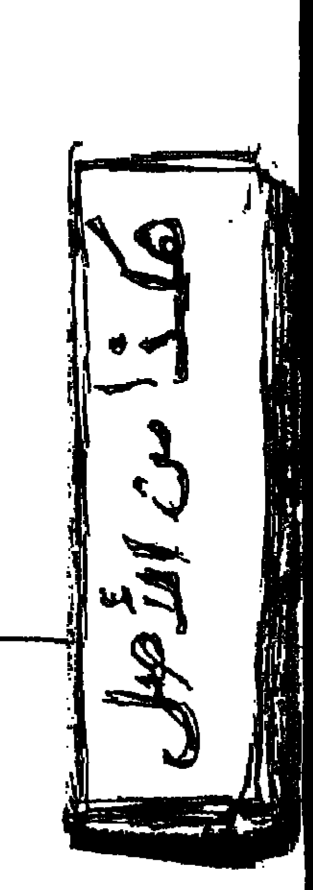
The electrodynamic system preferred by the Japanese presents serious technical difficulties. The greatest handicap seems to be that it uses supraconductive coils that have to be kept at -269° C, or a mere four degrees above absolute zero.

They must constantly be deep-frozen using liquid helium, which is extremely expensive and liable to break down.

Even if these problems were solved the electrodynamic system would still have the following drawbacks:

- unlike the Transrapid's electromagnetic system the EDS hovertrain needs an extra set of wheels for "take-off" and "landing" (it doesn't hover until it reaches speeds of about 200kph);
- the system provides a very low degree of cushioning, so designers must either dispense with comfort or install a *complicated and expensive carriage and* guiding system, as in the Transrapid;
- aerodynamic resistance, or turbulence, has an effect similar to that of driving with the hand-brake on. At 400kph this braking effect reaches twice the standard aerodynamic resistance rating; the corresponding rating for the Transrapid is only one twelfth of this level;
- the supraconductive magnets create magnetic fields 200 times strong than the Earth's natural magnetic fields inside the passenger compartment, bringing wristwatches to a halt and possibly affecting cardiac pacemakers, floppy disks and the like.

(Handelsblatt, Düsseldorf, 25 April 1988)



■ EXHIBITIONS

Picasso and the enigmatic 20 years of aberration



Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky wrote in 1912: "Picasso has made a marvellous leap forward and now stands on the other side of his inhuman crowd of followers. Just as they imagined they had caught up with him."

He was being satirical in this flare up of unconcealed schadenfreude, saturated with homage for the genius of the century. Kandinsky was at the time working in Munich involved in *Der Blaue Ritter* movement, founded the year before.

Two years after this description of Picasso's unpredictable tactics was written Picasso performed a death-defying leap.

Picasso the revolutionary renounced his subversive course of action and went in the opposite direction from then on. His entourage no longer understood the world.

The revolution was cubism, a clay world was knocked from its pedestal.

Arbitrarily putting pieces of a form together created another sense of reality. Decoupled from nature art became independent and pronounced its own laws.

But hardly had the new-won territory been surveyed and divided up among Picasso's comrades-in-arms, Picasso, the forward-pushing avantgarde artist, turned on his heels and went into retreat.

Picasso suddenly began to paint voluminous women, in poses reminiscent of antiquity, instead of splintered girls, such as the Demoiselles d'Avignon, naked youths from Arcadia playing the pipes of Pan, artists crowned with laurel wreaths and the tragic Minotaur surrounded in secrecy.

After aggressive modernity not only did Picasso espouse the realism of the past but here was the remorseful return of the lost son of the gods of Mediterranean myths.

The women embodied the sources of the ancient symbols of life with their earthenware jugs. The centaur Nestor steals Hercules' wife. There is Janus-headed Eros, blending together loving devotion and animal violence.

Picasso's untimely classicism was in some way like the Fall of Man. It lasted from 1914 until 1934. This twenty years of abberation puzzled his contemporaries and still puzzles us.

It was certainly no accident that this restorative period between cubism and surrealism has been ignored. There are no independent publications on this period and not a single museum exhibition has been devoted to this aspect of Picasso's art.

The active and ambitious Bielefeld Art Gallery has surprisingly acquired the honour of filling the gap that famous institutions were unprepared to fill.

This exhibition of Picasso's post-modern classicism exceeds all expectations and is far more than could be hoped for from the limited possibilities available to a provincial German museum.

There are 125 items listed in the catalogue, paintings, works in pastels, drawings, prints and a monumental piece of sculpture, provided thanks to generous loans from Paris but particularly from the United States.

It is very representative. The choice of exhibits is of a high quality and includes all the important themes Picasso handled in this period.

It is in no way absurd that Ulrich Weisner, the exhibition's organiser, should formally excuse himself for its merits. There is a suspicion that it is an opportunistic sign of the times that has awakened an interest in Picasso's post-modern interlude.

Picasso, the Proteus of the innovators of the modernist movement, made a confession that sounds very familiar to our ears. He said that he had to thank the painters, through whose eyes he saw, for all his ideas.

Picasso was not only an iconoclast but he held traditions in deep respect. Research has come up with any number of convincing explanations for Picasso's surprising about-face.

Georges Braque was his comrade-in-arms in cubism but in 1914 he went off to war and left Picasso behind in the fight for the revolutionary development in style, whose doctrinaire qualities were threatening it with rigidity.

Then Picasso, the Bohemian, was learning to enjoy the plesures of bourgeois life. He had got to know Olga Koklova in Italy, who came from a good family and was a dancer with the Diaghilev ballet. He married her.

His visit to Italy, the source of the antique tradition, came about through his cooperation with the Ballet Russe. He visited Rome, Naples and Pompeii. The bucolic lyricism of ancient Roman painting and the powerful sculpture of the Etruscans caused him to forget his enthusiasm for modernistic experiments.

Picasso was accompanied by Jean Cocteau who said: "Retour à l'ordre." He did not go along the pathway into the past alone. The inferno of the world war had destroyed basic beliefs in progress. The French cultural élite thirsted for secure values and in the clash with their Teutonic neighbours had discovered their own Latin origins. Brassai (the French-Hungarian photographer Gyúla Haláz) reported on Picasso's consistent change to the people of the Möditerranean, in keeping with the mood of the times. He was filled with a longing for light, for warmth and the sea. Edith Stein called his successful liaison "an Italian seduction," from which he created something

Continued on page 11



One of Picasso's classic-period works, *The Source*, 1921. (Photo: Catalogue)

From match-stick figures to an innocent dream world

Berlin has been named European Cultural Capital for 1988. One of the main attractions is an exhibition of the works of Josef Beuys at the Gropius Bau. Another major retrospective deals with A. R. Penck. Penck was born in Dresden but now lives in London.

A. R. Penck's paintings look just a little like prehistoric wall-paintings, or like children's drawings or graffiti.

They are symbolic, powerful and colourful abstracts of human life in a technical era.

He was born Ralf Winkler in Dresden in 1939 and left East Germany in 1980. Besides being a self-taught artist, he is also a musician and a writer. He became well-known in the West in the 1970s as the painter of match-stick men.

His match-stick men works can be seen among the 137 paintings, 51 water-colours and gouaches in this extensive retrospective of his work at West Berlin's Nationalgalerie. They are, in a sense, his trade mark.

Penck designed the exhibition himself. There are high walls on which the pictures are in part hung in rows one above another. They are ravines of pictures which end either in a cul-de-sac or open out into new perspectives.

There are in between a few pavilions, delightful resting places in the nervous chaos that confuses the senses and literally knocks the mind from above — you get a stiff neck from the effort.

The exhibition shows the development of a painter who has fundamentally not developed. Apart from the beginning, he has gone in a tireless circular movement, which has been kept going by a respectable fantasy and competition with creation at the same time.

In the 1950s he involved himself with what he called "reconstructions" of works by Rembrandt and van Gogh. He then discovered this symbolic language that is characteristic of his art.

In his work of the 1960s, "System" and "World pictures," mankind is the centre-point, depicted without any political qualities and in relation to the environment.

The impression is given of succinct individual ciphers and complicated, undecipherable drawing structures.

In the following work phase Penck in his "Stand Art," processing the theory of cybernetics, continued his stock-taking of society. In this phase his enigmatic drawings were just repetitions of one another.

This new direction of art, in fact, nothing but the old art product. Its market value, already sky-high, will be considerably increased as a result of this retrospective.

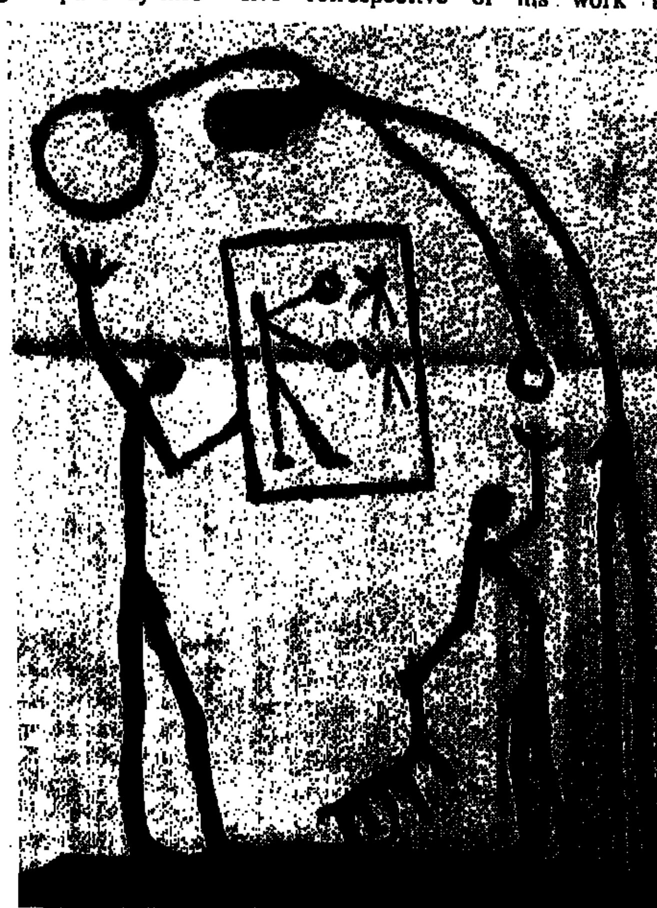
Nevertheless it is an art product that, giving a hint of an experience of suggestive colours and eruptive forms, provides mental pleasure.

Penck said in 1978 that the picture was the decisive criteria — not to be explained, to be given reasons for its existence or analysed, but to be experienced.

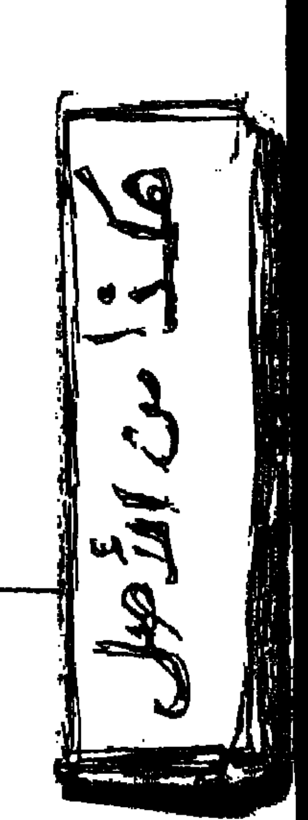
In this sense his new and latest work, his hieroglyphic pictures, are an experience in themselves, an experience of a fascinating, puzzling and innocent dream world, a world where its beginning, its departure and possible end (of art) are one.

Andrea Hilgenstock

(Hamburger Abendblatt, 25 April 1988)



One of A. R. Penck's 'System Pictures'. (Photo: Catalogue)



■ THE ARTS

Germans from both sides meet and celebrate birth of Shakespeare



For the 400th celebration in 1964 of William Shakespeare's birth, the German Shakespeare Society noted in its yearbook to honour the English playwright-poet that "all kinds of experiments should be excluded." A pious hope!

In 1964, of all years, Peter Zadek started a series of Shakespeare re-workings with *Held Henry*, designed to bring some understanding to the philosophical guardians of the great dramatist.

They insisted that plays in which period played no significance lost in power when they were brought up to date.

Then as now, Shakespeare in modern dress is decried as a theatre of the battlefield, the tribunal and the circus.

One critic said after Zadek's production of *Hamlet* in Bochum that he deserved the death sentence.

In other ways, however, 1964 was an important year for German Shakespeare research.

The society was founded in 1864 in Weimar. In 1963 it divided up, one branch located in Bochum and the other in Weimar. The 400th anniversary of the Bard's birth was celebrated by the two branches separately.

This year the 25th anniversary conference of the West German Shakespeare Society had as its motto "Shakespeare 1964-1988," using the occasion to review developments in this period.

The most important lectures and discussions harped on the old question of whether it should be allowed to re-work dramatically Shakespeare's plays.

Views were not expressed beligerently. People had forgiven, but not forgotten.

The Duisburg English literature expert Wilhelm Hörtmann revealed what were the intentions behind these provocations on the stage in the 1960s and 1970s.

Directors were not rebelling against Shakespeare but against theatres that were not producing what Shakespearean drama demanded.

Hörtmann said that these directors set themselves against the bourgeois idea of a visit to the theatre with a system of aesthetics which were characterised by contradictions and alienations, affronts and experiments.

According to Hörtmann there was at this time a change in the approach and significance of the stage set.

Some productions, changing the meaning of the piece, included glaring contradictions to the play's own world. In others the sets were not conceived with any underlying ideas in them just as an aim in themselves, Hörtmann said.

The exodus from theatres to old factories and abattoirs, exhibition halls and sports stadia, had already begun by the 1960s. Directors found the traditional atmosphere of the theatre worn out and inhibiting.

They increasingly wanted to exchange the place where something was put on to a venue where something happened, where there was action.

They wanted to broaden the elementary experience of the theatre, change traditional perspectives.

Shakespeare is himself at fault for the meaning and the changes of meaning in his works, Horst Zander from Grahamstown commented.

His dramas are distinguished by openness and variety but they raise more questions than they give answers. This leads to the position where Shakespeare's questions are diluted with a contemporary content, consciously ignoring his timelessness.

The question then arises as to whether everything can be permitted because everything seems possible.

Joachim Kaiser from Munich took up this theme in his lecture, entitled "Shakespeare's freedom and our theatre."

Kaiser recognised that there was no such thing as an "objective" theatre text. Every epoch saw itself in Shakespeare. To this extent every production reflects the director's world-view. Kaiser maintained that there was a link between text and context.

He was only willing to accept critical changes to the original text if they added something to the play.

Kaiser said that he thought that this re-working of the text, in certain places, seemed more interesting than "interpretations serving the cause of literature" that were common on the stage up to the 1950s.

Nevertheless a dimension in the major plays fell by the wayside. Kaiser said that no-one dares to declaim blank verse any longer. Unlike in opera verse, poetry and pathos cause embarrassment in the theatre and are thus avoided.

He said there was no actor on the German stage today who could speak Shakespearean lines properly. The lyrical element is just whispered, the heavy passages thundered out.

Kaiser complained that the "naturalist simplification" of Shakespeare brought about a loss of a play's substance. This has done a great deal of harm to this great poet in recent times, he maintained.

Kaiser's complaint is just. The Bochum production of *Romeo and Juliet* showed how difficult it is to express deep feeling and high poetry.

All the same one welcomes the fact that there were four Shakespeare productions in Bochum this year.

Apart from Bochum's dreary mounting of a Young Old Vic production of *Romeo and Juliet*, the Bremen Shakespeare Company put on a lively production of *The Taming of the Shrew* and Frank-Patrick Steckel a respectable performance of *Antony and Cleopatra*.

It was a pleasure to see a delegation from East Germany of English literature experts — for the first time since the split up of the Shakespeare Society.

The new president of the West German Shakespeare Society, Ulrich Suerbaum, regretted that one hundred years of unity were broken in 1963, but he equally expressed pleasure at the new contacts that had been made.

Willi Schrader, an English literature expert from East Berlin, took for his lecture a theme that everyone on both sides could agree with. He said that Shakespeare had "a lot to say to us even today."

Dietmar Kanthak

(Hannoversche Allgemeine, 22 April 1988)

Picasso

Continued from page 10

quite different to an anaemic classicism.

Picasso's mythological female figures are presented as hefty goddesses of fertility, abounding with vitality, linked to the earth and created to soar to Mount Olympus.

The fiery pinks of the flesh recall hard-baked terra-cotta figures. The male-harsh realism of the Romans is closer to him than the idealistic perfection of the Greek classics.

It is obvious here just how true Picasso was to himself in his backward look. Picasso, the classicist, just as Picasso the cubist, instinctively avoided all deceptive, soporific harmonies and looked for everything that was disquieting, that made life exciting and unpredictable.

Wolf Schön

(Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt, Bonn, 22 April 1988)

Edmund Husserl and dealing a blow to posivitism

"We must get back to sources," said Immanuel Kant. His Copernican change of philosophy had established the "Court of Reason" before which nature was answerable.

With the battle-cry "Down to business" Edmund Husserl completed Kant's efforts towards the "natural world outlook" in which mankind took up the central position.

The philosophy of phenomenology, which Husserl founded, was a philosophy opposed to positivism and concerned with the experiences of the self.

Husserl's ideology-free method was further developed by such philosophers as Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Paul Sartre.

It was "a third way" between Marxism and scientific positivism.

In 1911 he published *Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft* which is now forgotten outside the academic world.

He died 50 years ago this year but he has been remembered at meetings in the Federal Republic and the United States. Only now is his work emerging from the shadows of his important pupils.

At the World Congress on Philosophy, to be held in Brighton, Britain, in August, special events will take place to commemorate Husserl and his work, that resisted "the fragmentation of philosophy."

Husserl was born on 8 April 1859 in Prossnitz, Moravia. His father was a Jewish fashion clothes dealer.

He studied astronomy, physics, mathematics and philosophy at Leipzig, Berlin and Vienna.

He graduated in mathematics in 1882 and was then undecided whether he should devote his life to mathematics or philosophy.

Franz Brentano, who had developed his own phenomenology, convinced Husserl that philosophy could be put down forcefully and not in cloudy propositions.

In 1887 Husserl qualified as a university lecturer with *Über den Begriff der Zahl*.

Then followed 14 lean years as a university lecturer. Not until *Logischen Untersuchungen* did he make the breakthrough in philosophy, which brought about his appointment to a chair at Göttingen University.

Roman Ingarden, Dietrich von Hildebrand, Hellmuth Plessner and Edith Stein were among Husserl's pupils in Göttingen.

In 1913 his *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie* appeared. After its publication he was offered an appointment in Freiburg. There he had Martin Heidegger as his assistant and there followed a period of productive research.

Husserl concerned himself with the question how nature and spirit came together in the fundamentals of phenomenology and how a "universal science could be developed."

The doubts of Descartes, who only left untouched the activities of the conscious, were a leitmotif for Husserl.

In 1931 he published his *Cartesianischen Meditationen* in which he gave an introduction to his thinking.

He became a professor emeritus in 1928. Heidegger succeeded him.

Three years later Husserl gave a lecture to 1,600 in Berlin on "Phenomenology and Anthropology" but in 1933 he was forbidden by the Nazis to lecture any more.

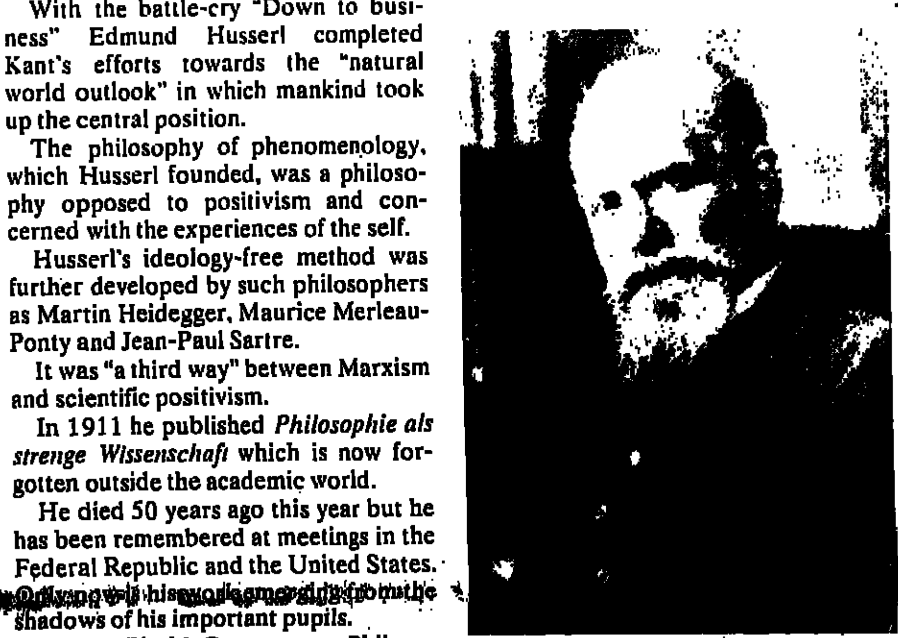
In a lecture he delivered in Prague he developed his legacy to philosophy, *Die Krise der europäischen Wissenschaft*, published in 1936.

Husserl tried feverishly in his last years to write a "systematic basic work" that would neutralise the fashionable trend to existentialism.

But he died in Freiburg on 27 April 1937, aged 79, without having written this work. In his literary estate 40,000 type-written pages were found that have been studied in Husserl archives in Leuven, Cologne and Freiburg and are to be published in the series *Husserliane*.

Wolfgang Schirmacher

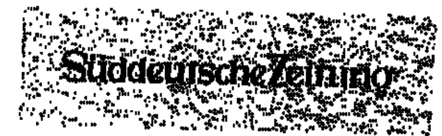
(Nordwest-Zeitung, Oldenburg, 28 April 1988)



Works emerging from shadows . . . Edmund Husserl. (Photo: Alber Verlag)

■ THE ENVIRONMENT

Minister calls Coca-Cola's new plastic bottle 'illegal'



Coca-Cola has cancelled a 10-year-old commitment to stop using plastic bottles in Germany. Federal Environment Minister Klaus Töpfer has been quick to respond to the challenge.

The new 1.5-litre plastic bottles used by the Coca-Cola Corp. in the Federal Republic are, he says, in breach of the Waste Disposal Act and liable to a deposit of 50 pfennigs.

Twenty-one years ago, on 29 April 1967, 50 leading German breweries launched "no deposit, no return" bottles in the Federal Republic.

Manufacturers and traders embarked on a course that disposed, from their point of view, of the tiresome problem of packaging, which was socialised as a result.

In other words, society was saddled with the problem of waste packaging and local authorities are left holding the baby of garbage tips bursting at the seams.

Bonn has not yet seen any need to pay much heed to local authority cries of woe. Interior Ministers from Gerhart Baum to Friedrich Zimmermann have made do with strong words, action being thwarted by their respective FDP Economic Affairs Ministers.

So nothing has been done even to stem the tide of waste packaging that weighs so heavily on society in terms of sheer bulk.

Bonn politicians have banked on voluntary agreements with breweries and the soft drinks industry. They have done so in vain, as a glance at the contents of any German dustbin will show.

This approach was doomed to failure. No businessman who can calculate his costs will voluntarily forgo advantages enjoyed by a competitor.

That is fair enough, but it leaves the ball in the politicians' court. It is for them to draw up and enforce regulatory policy to prevent general chaos.

Consumers have gradually come to realise that chaos is in the offing. The message has been brought home by the steady increase in the charges local authorities make for waste disposal.

Glass bottles are undeniably tiresome — heavy and a burden to return to the retailer. Cleaning them for reuse is not entirely environment-friendly either — unless they contained nothing but mineral water.

Transporting them costs fuel and power too, as shown by the brewers' lorries that are constantly on the move.

Coca-Cola feels PET, short for polyethylene terphtalate, may be the solution. It can be reused. As it is expensive, customers might be persuaded not to throw PET bottles away.

But that would presuppose an efficient, countrywide collection system, a system that must first be set up and then be accepted — and used — by the trade and the public.

It is much easier to make use of the immediate effect of a high deposit on bottles. Glass (on which a deposit has been paid) might then compete with plastic (ditto).

That is precisely what the Environment Minister has in mind with his regulation issued in accordance with the Waste Disposal Act.

It will make a 50-pfennig deposit mandatory on disposable plastic bottles of mineral water, soft drinks, beer and wine. There will also be a statutory obligation on traders to take back empty bottles.

So the new regulation would not just apply to Coke. It would also affect manufacturers of still mineral water who sell their product in disposable plastic bottles.

It would certainly affect the Aldi discount grocery chain, which has made systematic use of this legislative loophole and sells nothing but disposable bottles.

Professor Töpfer's predecessors have toyed with the idea of mandatory deposits in their time, but they failed to act on the idea.

The sole remaining opponent of returnable bottles on which a deposit is charged is the business wing of the Free Democrats, who have been nothing if not frank (and consistent) in their views on the subject.

So Professor Töpfer may yet end up acting on his fine words (unlike his predecessors).

The arguments levelled by trade and industry against his proposal are much the same (and carry as little weight) as what they always claim in connection with environmental demands.

The Confederation of German Industry (BDI) has claimed, in a letter to Federal Economic Affairs Minister Martin Bangemann, that compulsory deposits will influence the "freedom" of the trade and the "sovereignty" of the consumer in their choice of products.

The sovereign manner in which man maltreats nature has resulted in locations for new garbage tips no longer being available and planners seeking to sanitary landfill sites of international geological importance such as a gravel pit near Darmstadt that has yielded priceless fossils.

The sovereign manner in which industrial waste has been disposed of in recent years has laid waste to much of the country. Cleaning up the resulting mess, even where it might be possible, is virtually ruled out on cost grounds.

There isn't a scrap of land in Germany that hasn't been affected by industrial laisser faire. The sovereign manner in which waste has been sent up the factory chimney, pumped down the drain or simply dumped on a scrap of "waste" ground has either poisoned the soil or certainly made it an eyesore on a large scale.

The disposable bottle is only one aspect of what, in the final analysis, is a way of life that is hostile to life itself. Packaging must no longer be up to the individual when the consequences of freedom of individual choice weigh so heavily on society as a whole.

Mandatory deposits on bottles would not be a bad start. Professor Töpfer will need to fight to ensure they are imposed. He need have no fear of being taken to the European Court of Justice.

The mountains of garbage are the unacceptable face of industrial civilisation. They are, as it were, the *other side* of the coin. They must not be allowed to become its obverse — the side that is normally seen.

Martin Urban

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 26 April 1988)

Nuclear waste, industrial waste, domestic waste: more and . . .

An avalanche of household garbage is not the only bottleneck that threatens to choke the country. Disposal of industrial waste, some of which is highly toxic, poses serious problems too.

Federal Environment Minister Klaus Töpfer, who has spent months sorting out the mess of nuclear waste disposal and has yet to win his battle to reintroduce deposit bottles and ban the disposable variety, has sounded the alarm yet again.

Special waste, a category that includes diluted acid, sewage sludge, contaminated soil, industrial waste containing halogens, old oil and oily waste from works processing metal and plastics, is steadily increasing in quantity.

"We haven't the capacity to dispose of the same amount again in the Federal Republic itself," he said.

In 1985 about 700,000 of an estimated five million tonnes of special waste were shipped abroad for disposal. Professor Töpfer feels stepping up this proportion is not the solution to the problem.

So he and the *Länder* have laid the groundwork for a programme of "concerted action" by politics, administration, organisations, research and industry he is "happy to say" has been endorsed by IG Chemie, the chemicals, paper and ceramics workers' union.

The aim is to commit all concerned to provide the necessary infrastructure and locations for incinerators, recycling plant and waste dumps and to stimulate and encourage readiness to do so in their respective sectors.

Environment-friendly waste disposal techniques are, he says, available. Special waste can be treated without endangering either public health or the environment.

Special waste must, of course, be prevented or recycled wherever possible, but new disposal facilities, especially incinerators, are urgently needed.

An estimated 1.8 million tonnes of special waste a year needs incinerating; the capacity currently available is a mere 600,000 tonnes.

In other words, a 60-waggon goods train a day could be made up containing nothing but special waste for which incinerator capacity is not available.

Nearly twice this capacity would be needed to comply with the stricter provisions of the new waste disposal regulations: twice as many, that is, as the 10 new incinerator facilities so far planned.

A further five special waste dumps would be needed, not to mention an unspecified number of chemical and physical processing units.

Public (and local authority) opposition in recent years has led to not one new project being completed.

Arnulf Gosch

(Die Welt, Bonn, 30 April 1988)

■ MEDICINE

Mystery of later-life resurgence of polio symptoms among childhood victims

Muscular atrophy; pains in muscles, joints and back; tiredness; difficulty in breathing; thes are all symptoms of post-polio syndrome, or PPS. It affects in later life many people who once had poliomyelitis. Gertrud Weiss reports for *Süddeutsche Zeitung.*

Decades after suffering from poliomyelitis in childhood or adolescence, victims can suffer from follow-up problems.

They are people who were not vaccinated because none was available. Mass vaccination did not begin in Europe until the early 1960s.

The consequences of the disease exercised an enormous influence on patients and their families. But most victims found a place in society and lived productive lives.

They tried to offset physical disability by energy and stamina. They often tried to play down their complaint in order to hold their own in the world of the fit and healthy.

Now, 25 years and more after their acute illness, more and more are becoming aware of symptoms that are ominously similar to the original ones all those years ago.

Feelings of muscle weakness, sometimes slowly, sometimes in waves; a resumption of the process of atrophy, or wasting of muscle tissue.

It even affects muscles or groups of muscles that had totally recovered from or were not affected by polio.

Former patients complain of growing joint pains and backache, of paralysed muscles growing more sensitive to pressure and touch, and of a general painful sensitivity to cold.

They report difficulty in breathing, which is a new development. At times they have difficulty in swallowing and even in speaking.

During the daytime they repeatedly suffer from overwhelming tiredness. They simply don't seem to get enough sleep at night.

Ground made good, often by hard work, is lost. Polio patients suddenly need splints, crutches, wheelchairs again.

They increasingly rely on outside help, which makes inroads into the independence by which they set such great store.

This depressing experience is a serious mental burden for many victims, especially as some doctors and therapists are sceptical and seem not to believe them.

The accepted medical view is that the patient's condition can be regarded as stabilised after a certain period of time.

Some of the former polio patients are still under 30. Most are between 35 and 55. Natural wear and tear is doubtless a contributory factor among the over-60s.

In English-speaking countries, especially the United States with over 250,000 survivors of past polio epidemics, the growing number of former polio patients who sought medical assistance again in the early 1980s have started the ball rolling.

Since the development of therapy and rehabilitation programmes and the swift success of mass vaccination polio had been considered, to all intents and purposes, history. Research concentrated on other issues.

The situation in a number of developing countries is still alarming, with over 200,000 new polio cases a year reported.

They are due to poor hygiene and an unfavourable climate and to difficulties in carrying out mass vaccination programmes. So the rest of the world must beware.

The symptom, or group of symptoms, characteristic of the recurrence of problems has come to be known as post-polio syndrome, or PPS.

The main symptoms are post-polio progressive muscular atrophy, or PPMA, muscle, joint and back pains, tiredness and difficulty in breathing.

They need not all occur simultaneously or in equal intensity, and not all former polio patients are affected.

Most PPS victims were 10 or older when they first contracted polio. They needed hospital treatment, possibly including artificial respiration, and initially suffered from paralysis in both arms and legs.

The more serious the initial polio was, the more marked the post-polio syndrome appears to be.

Precise diagnostic criteria for PPS have yet to be established. In an article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* Neil Cashman of Montreal and Chicago reported last year the surprising finding that PPS occurred not only among PPMA victims but also among post-polio patients whose condition had been stable for years.

The clinical condition is thus the yardstick, and all that can be said for sure is that other causes, such as diabetes, nutritional defects, anaemia, endocrinal upsets, cardiac and kidney complaints, can be ruled out.

PPS has also been shown to be attributable neither to ageing in the accepted sense of the term nor to reactivation of the polio virus, as some had surmised.

Progressive muscular atrophy seems likelier to be due to the failure of "substitute nerve fibre," says David Wiechers of Ohio State University and Marinos C. Dalakas, also quoted from the *New England Journal of Medicine.*

After damage to or destruction of cells in the spinal cord that are powerhouses of muscular movement, nerve fibre can extend in bulk from healthy neighbouring cells.

They re-establish links with muscle fibre of which the motoric nerve cell was destroyed by the infection.

Thus a single nerve cell supplies three to ten times as many muscle fibres as it would normally be required to do.

Within months of the acute infection outsize motoric units are set up to offset the damage, but their metabolic needs cannot, Wiechers says, be met in the long term.

In a 1985 survey Lauro Halstead of Washington found over 87 per cent of post-polio patients to suffer from symptoms of post-polio syndrome.

In two later surveys Bradley reports details of the relapse. In relation to patients' best post-polio recovery condition the number who found themselves relying on a wheelchair again was up 50 per cent, while the number needing mechanical respiration, mainly to prevent apnoea while asleep, was up 80 to 280 per cent.

Groups of patients could not be classified according to their post-polio symptoms, however, because they were inter-related.

Tiredness, in conjunction with overexertion, can trigger muscular pain. PPMA can cause additional skeletal deformation and pain. Increased deformation can change muscle mechanics and extend muscular atrophy.

Post-polio patients were urgently advised at last year's St Louis congress to adapt their style of living to their present condition.

They must stay active but not rush around. They must plan their activities and dose them well.

Overpacing must be avoided, as must inordinate individual effort and long-term strain.

After successive work stages it takes nerve cells and muscle tissue longer and longer to recover, especially after years of over-exertion.

Jacquelin Perry of Downey, California, who has followed the progress of polio patients since the 1950s epidemics, counsels careful, easy movement therapy and resistance exercises custom-made for the individual case.

Süddeutsche Zeitung

Even in their present state patients can still strengthen their muscles and improve the frequent impairment of their circulation.

But if they kept to their routine further, irreversible muscular atrophy would be inevitable, the effect being much the same as being bedridden for some time without accompanying exercises.

Post-polio patients must sit up straight and walk upright (as straight and as upright as possible), using muscles on both sides of the body, no matter how much discipline this required.

If need be, the position adopted when sitting or lying down must be rectified in strict accordance with individual requirements.

Special care and attention must be paid to the adjustment of orthopaedic aids and the possible provision of new and better equipment.

Precautions similar to those taken with muscular dystrophy patients must be observed during surgery carried out under total anaesthesia, the reason being damage to the nervous system that may not have come to light.

Staff of a Munich foundation have confirmed US findings in their contacts with post-polio patients. They hope their first PPS congress, the first of its kind ever held in the Federal Republic, will trigger interest in and understanding for the new problems among the German general public.

Between 1946 and 1962, according to figures compiled by the Federal Statistics Office, Wiesbaden, nearly 54,500 polio cases were reported, followed by a further 707 between 1963 and 1967.

Gertrud Weiss

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 28 April 1988)

■ EDUCATION

Bright spot in dark future as students throng to over-crowded campuses

The universities are full to overflowing in spite of warnings that graduates will have a hard time finding employment. Dagmar Deckstein took a closer look at why this is so and discovered, among other things, a change in thinking in the world of business which means that the outlook for graduates is not quite as black as it is often painted. This article appeared in *Stuttgarter Zeitung*.

In spite of the well-known differences between researchers' predictions of how many people are going to be doing what when and what really happens,both statisticians and politicians concerned with education have shown unusual surprise at the latest statistics about university students.

According to the figures, never have so many school pupils decided on going to university than in the past year: 230,000 of them, nine per cent more than the year before, streamed through the campus gates.

The annual increase up until now has not been higher than 4 per cent; in 1984 and 1985, there were even declines of 5 per cent and 6 per cent respectively.

Politicians and the universities then acted on predictions that, because of the low birth-rate years, there would be reductions in the numbers of students entering universities every year until the turn of the century. They even envisaged a battle between universities to attract students.

And some federal and *Land* ministers rubbed their hands together in glee at the thought of the cuts that could be made in education budgets. But, it is, sadly for them, not working out that way. There are 1.41 million students enrolled at German universities, more than ever before. And university vice-chancellors say the figure will soon hit 1.5 million.

And this despite the fact that there is only a capacity for 790,000 students.

The universities are groaning more and more under the load. The politicians responsible for education can see the coffers being emptied by more student grants and support for the disadvantaged in the system.

But who can blame the students for deciding on taking the step which will be to their greatest advantage? For many years a lot of paper was flung about in an attempt to try and get school pupils to forget about a university education (because of the difficulty of getting employment after graduation). One of the references made in a bid to put them off was to "an imminent flood of academics."

In any case, in can't be said that anybody expressly invited young people to descend on the campuses en masse. Now comes the great guessing game of what is attracting them to the universities. The reason are several and closely related.

Admittedly, figures show that work prospects for graduates has worsened. The number graduates out of work has stayed steady at around 5 per cent of the total unemployed. And, in general, they find work more quickly than other unemployed people.

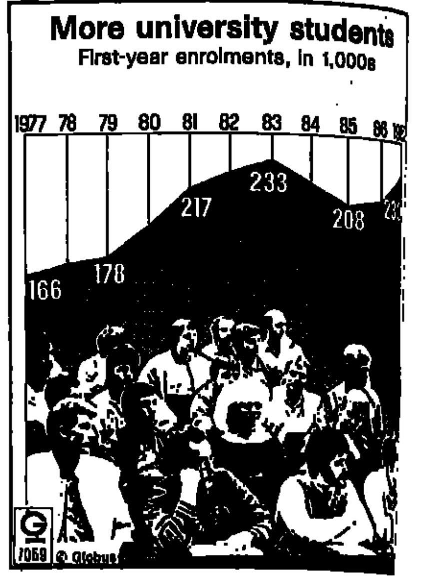
Employment experts say that the demand for graduates remains high. They are increasingly being offered jobs which once did not require a university education.

And now, degrees tailored precisely to specific careers are no longer regarded in all situations as essential. The main thing is that in every department, the student learns what is necessary in every career: the ability to think. Commerce has long been turning towards even a type of graduate who used to be regarded as unusable, the arts graduate, and making use of his or her knowledge.

For example, Munich University together with the Bavarian Employers' Organisation has begun a project with the grand-sounding aim of "opening up for commerce the great human capital of the arts faculties."

Employers in the scheme are full of praise for it. Many graduates have proven their worth in manufacturing, marketing or data processing.

"Whatever else they study — German philology, educational theory, history, the social sciences — they acquire many of those qualities that businesses under constant pressure to innovate need more of: the capacity to observe and analyse; the ability to arrive at independent criteria by which to make value judgments; flexibility; the quality of being able to learn; the ability of self-expression; awareness of cultural, social and ecological trends."

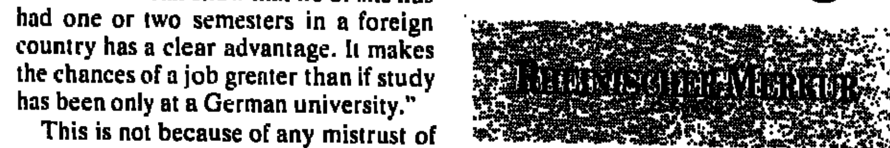


Although that assessment appears hopeful, the fact is that every student to-day cannot expect to be welcomed with open arms somewhere in the job market.

University pioneer Wilhelm von Humboldt (philosopher and statesman who lived from 1767 to 1859) said that education should not be directed by outside interests.

The new generation of German students, which is obviously observing Humboldt's remarks furtively, would probably receive unconditional applause from him. But even he would have been shocked to see how many of them there now are.

Dagmar Deckstein
(Stuttgarter Zeitung, 22 April 1988)



Study at foreign university an advantage in job market



When Hans-Peter Jörger, a careers adviser in Frankfurt, sorts through job application papers for his clients, he keeps an eye out for one special detail.

"Whoever can show that he or she has had one or two semesters in a foreign country has a clear advantage. It makes the chances of a job greater than if study has been only at a German university."

This is not because of any mistrust of the German university system. But people who have gone overseas do show that they have initiative and at least can be classed as enterprising. It improves the foreign-language capability of most and shows that they are internationally aware.

Al of these are qualities are highly regarded as prerequisites for senior positions of tomorrow — even if it true, as business representatives emphasise — that study in a foreign land itself is no guarantee of a career.

However valuable study in a foreign country might be, it is not just a matter of desire but of marks and pfennigs. At many foreign universities, fees are high. At others, living costs are higher than in Germany. Does that mean that studying abroad is just for the wealthy?

No. An organisation called DAAD, the German academic exchange service, which is heavily funded by the federal government, provides support for some.

The conditions laid down for qualifying for DAAD support are strict, but they are exclusively academic yardsticks. If a decision has to be made between two people with evenly matched qualifications, support will go to the less well off. In the last 12 months, more than 9,200 students have received grants.

As a rule, awards are made for a year for all types of university and all fields of study. But that doesn't mean any institute of study at all. There is a list of universities which are recognised world-wide. This is usually to the student's advantage. For example, two semesters at Harvard is of more value than three at a third-class provincial university in America's Mid West.

Whoever comes through the DAAD selection process — and that is only one out of four — receives a monthly allowance and restituted travel costs. The allowance depends on which country he or she is going to.

DAAD also pays student fees. A student who goes to a Dutch, Belgian or French university gets a total of 910 marks a month. A student who spends eight weeks in Moscow studying Russian gets paid about double as much a month.

In exceptional cases, DAAD also pays for a preliminary language course before the student goes overseas. In other cases where some special need arises, this will also be paid for.

Graduates also qualify if they want to extend their knowledge in a foreign country. But the graduate has to take the step not later than two years after graduation. In these cases, research should be in universities that have concluded cooperation deals with German universities.

The most-favoured foreign universities are in the United States. They attract students from across the study spectrum — scientists, arts students and social scientists. There is even a special programme for teachers of handicapped children.

Students of oriental languages coming to the Far East: Thailand, Malaysia or China, for example, take students who are able to speak the local language. So are students who, say, want to do practical work with a Japanese firm.

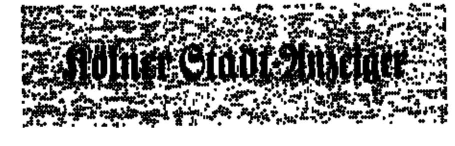
It is not unusual for a year to elapse between application for a support and the first cheque. Favoured applicants are advised to plan their trips well in advance.

Specialised universities and institutes have been involved for two years, but with one limitation: studies are mainly restricted to Europe. Courses are possible in America and Canada but under special circumstances. Although here all foreign universities are possible practice-oriented campuses are favoured.

Wilfried Meisterburg
(Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt, Bonn, 22 April 1988)

■ SOCIETY

Isa Vermehren, from cabaret singer to nun to inmate at Dachau



Isa Vermehren has been many things: a cabaret singer, a concentration camp prisoner and a nun.

When she was 15, in 1933, she appeared at Werner Finck's legendary Berlin cabaret, Katacombe, playing her concertina.

The public were used to Finck's ambiguous sallies and veiled innuendoes. Everyone realised that the young girl singer in a sailor suit could only be a send up of Goebbels.

The compère presented her with the words: "The first on the bridge is a midget of a chap, but he has a spout like a hawse hole (the hole on a ship the anchor passes through)".

Isa Vermehren is now 70. Her father was a Lübeck lawyer and, although her family was liberal Protestant, she became a Catholic nun. For many years, she headed one of the two Catholic gymnasiums (academically oriented secondary schools) in Hamburg.

She was arrested during the Third Reich and was held in Ravensbrück, Buchenwald and Dachau as a "Sippenhäftling," that is when all members of a family were imprisoned for what one had done.

The Vermehren family rejected National Socialism from the very beginning. SPD Reichstag member Julius Leber was a good friend of the family and was arrested soon after the Nazis came to power in 1933.

Speaking in the Sophie Barat House in Bonn Isa Vermehren, a member of the Order of the Holy Heart of Jesus, said: "One knew straight away how it would all end."

She got the job at the Katacombe through friends. She said that Werner Finck and his troupe were "a small piece of opposition, or at least an outlet."

"If you could get your punch-line right, it gave a little relief," she said.

Finck, who would say on stage, "Heil — what's the name?" had to give up in 1935.

Looking back to this time, when she had a small role in a Rudolf Platte film, she said: "It was an episode, one full of meaning. You had to see how you could keep your head above water, physically and morally."

She categorically refused to go to a university, although she would have liked to have studied law or medicine. After the war, as a young nun, she did study English and German in Bonn.

Frau Vermehren did not deal with religious questioning in the clash with the "spiritual dictator." She said: "The unavoidable question you had to deal with was the search for something to set your hopes on."

The "civilised humanism" of her home appeared to her to be too weak. In 1938 she was converted to Catholicism, much against her parents' wishes.

"My mother was fairly shrewd for she said that if I was converted I would enter a convent," she said.

Then came the war. Isa Vermehren insisted on no "half-measure war-service." She did not want to work in a munitions factory or a hospital.

She was unable to win against the bureacratic machine and very soon she was playing her concertina on stage — this time entertaining German troops "in miserable anti-aircraft units" along the North Sea coast or at the front in France, Italy, Norway and Russia.

She was on the road for months on end with a troupe of women. She said: "We tried to create a contrast in our programmes of something between 'Lili Marleen' and 'Strength through Joy'."

She did not join in slogans about final victory. She said that officers spoke on the side of the madness of war.

She risked making a few comments that showed "the facts" that could have earned her a death sentence for demoralising the troops.

Since then Isa Vermehren has often asked herself whether through this "moral stand" she had not unknowingly supported the war that she so categorically rejected? Was it not cheap encouragement to hold on rather than spiritual welfare that guided her?

She said: "The expression spiritual welfare was too big for me, but you could call it that."

A letter from a former soldier who knew her in Minsk as the "girl with the concertina on the Eastern Front" strengthened her in this view. He wrote to her after he had seen her on the Satuday evening TV programme "A Word for Sunday."

After 40 years he thanked her for a little humanity in the battlefield.

She has herself known the fear of death and the readiness to die. In 1944 she and five family members were put into separate prisons and concentration camps because of her younger brother. He was a German diplomat in Turkey and had given himself up to the British in Egypt, asking for asylum. Isa Vermehren said: "I was glad that at least one of us had taken such a definite line of action."

Thanked 40 years afterwards for 'humanity on the battlefield'. . . Isa Vermehren. (Photo: Bernd Arnold)

After the war she wrote a book, *Reise durch den letzten Akt*, an unnerving report on her impressions in the face of death, of the murder and persecution of prisoners, as well as of their hatred and denunciations of each other.

She does not try to pour praise on her own life. In the middle of the 1960s, when the question of German failure during the Third Reich was raised in her school, she did not try to ignore the issues.

She said: "I did not have to wake up from a dream or bury any hopes."

Still she jumps to the defence of the Church against sweeping judgments when the role of Christians during the Nazi period is being discussed.

She said: "Of course there were lame bishops and cowardly priests, but that is not the entire truth."

Of her own position she is self-critical. She said: "I have experienced many situations in which, with hindsight, I wished I had been more courageous. But I believe that the civic virtues we have when everything is going well, are not adequate enough for extreme situations."

When young people debate resistance to the Nazis she points out that to oppose a dictator "calls for quite different moral qualities."

Isa Vermehren has remained a woman who knows her own mind. This has not been changed by her vows of obedience she has made to her Order.

She is now retired but sits on the central committee of German Catholics, takes part in religious television programmes such as "A Word for Sunday," writes articles and lectures on religious subjects.

Sometimes, when no-one is listening, she quietly sings the old songs from the Katacombe days. She says: "I'm the last fossil from the Fincke days."

Harald Biskup
(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 20 April 1988)

Problems of mammon and God on the nation's inland waterways

About 80 Protestant and Catholic clergymen and church workers met in Hamburg to discuss inland shipping — that's right, inland shipping.

It is an area where there a lot of pastoral work to be done, as can be seen from the fact that it was the third European Ecumenical Conference of ministers who serve the inland waterways community.

Twenty came from the Netherlands, four from Switzerland, one from Austria and 12 from both Belgium and France.

Protestant and Catholic inland waterways clergymen met for their first conference in Mannheim in 1980. Four years later, they met in Holland.

Hamburg's shipping pastor Christian Schulze said that the main worries a clergyman hears when making a "home call" concern economic problems, not just problems concerning faith.

Many barge-owners and their families have been given a lot of trouble by the competitive pressures, quite apart from natural catastrophes such as the flooding this winter on many rivers.

Another important problem for these people is the education of their children. There are in the Federal Republic three homes that provide schooling for the 120 children of parents who work on the inland waterways.

Schulze said: "Apart from these children no-one has any idea how many youngsters there are in German families that work on the rivers and inland canals. There are no statistics."

The usual arrangement is for the mother to remain on land and look after the children. Otherwise the barge- or lighter-owner must employ someone and in most cases there is no cash to pay wages to additional seamen to work the vessel.

The social affairs office gives assistance to pay the fees for the children to be lodged in one of the homes.

Ecumenical cooperation is an important aspect of the clergy involved in inland shipping. Pastor Schulze said: "Often one of my colleagues only gets to know whether a certain family is Catholic or Protestant by going to visit them on board their vessel."

The different confessions work well together and this ecumenism extends beyond the Federal Republic's borders.

There are close contacts between the clergy who care for inland waterway people along the Rhine states, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Switzerland.

The only "floating church" is to be found in Hamburg's port, but it cannot move because it no longer has an engine.

The vessel is used not only for religious services but also for conferences. Once a month there is a meeting to discuss problems of mutual interest or just to get together.

Pastor Schulze also has available a launch for his use. The verger is the crewman. He is able to visit ships in Hamburg's port network in this vessel.

The Church has been active among inland shipping people for more than one hundred years.

This activity began in 1870 with Johann Hinrich Wichern, founder of Rauhes House, a social-welfare home.

Wichern sent out the first missionaries into the inland shipping community. At first their task was to spread the Scriptures.

Later, with greater emphasis on Church welfare work, concern for the social wellbeing of people working on rivers and canals became more important.

There are at present about 10,000 people working on rivers and canals in the Federal Republic with a further 1,500 on land.

The German inland waterways fleet is made up of about 2,500 motor vessels, including tanker lighters, totalling 2.5 million tons. There are also about 400 pusher-barges totalling close to 630,000 tons.

The inland waterways network in the Federal Republic stretches over 4,400 kilometres.

dpa
(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 27 April 1988)